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THE HIDDEN SPRING

A Drama in Four Acts

By Roberto Bracco

Translated by Dirce St. Cyr

CHARACTERS

Stephen
Theresa
Valentine
The Princess Meralda Heller
An Old Beggar
Don Fausto
Romolo (a servant)

The scene is laid in Naples, at the present time

ACT I

The Park of Posilipo. On the right is Stephen Baldi's little villa. The architecture is simple but in very good taste. The one door leading into the villa is closed. In front of the door a step and a veranda without a balustrade. Above the door, three small windows. On the window-sill of one of them, a vase with roses. The principal entrance of the villa is supposed to be on the opposite side. On the left, trees and rose bushes. Up stage, a drive and as background a wall and view of the sea. On the veranda, rockers and chairs. In the garden, a bench. In the distance on the left, one can see Vesuvius. The sun gives a striking light to the scene. The air is full of gaiety.

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SCENE I

THERESA, VALENTINE, ROMOLO

(*Valentine, a man about forty, hunchback, and with irregular features, is standing at the window, trying to revive some roses, which are in a vase, out on the window-sill. Romolo, a typical Italian servant, is standing in the garden, holding by the collar a coat, which Theresa is carefully brushing. The latter is a woman about twenty-five, very sweet and simple in her manners*).

Theresa.— We are better out here. It is better not to get more dust in the house.

Valentine.— I say Madame Theresa, what are you doing there?

Theresa.— Can you not see? I am brushing Stephen's clothes. Hold it up, Romolo.

Valentine.— It seems to me that Romolo should brush his master's clothes.

Romolo.— Madame does not want me to do it.

Valentine.— It is because you are not obliging! Of course a servant whose name is Romolo, cannot humiliate himself to brush the clothes of a master, whose name is simply 'Stephen.' But don't forget, your master is not an ordinary Stephen!—

Romolo (*grumbling*).— Go on, go on!

Theresa (*reprimanding him*).— Romolo!

Valentine (*takes the roses out of the vase, changes the water and puts them back, one by one*).— They don't last very long, these roses, Madame Theresa. They are already beginning to wither.

Theresa.— You gathered them two days ago.

Valentine.— Two days is too short a time!

Theresa (*putting the folded coat on a chair, to Romolo*).— Now the waistcoat.

Romolo (*taking the waistcoat from a chair and giving it to Theresa*).

Theresa (*going on brushing the clothes.*)

Valentine.— Sometimes, you are able to keep your roses fresh for a week.

Theresa.— Why do you keep them in your room during the night?

Valentine.— I like to sleep in the midst of the perfume, Madame Theresa!

Theresa.— And that hurts you and the roses (*folding the waistcoat*).

Valentine.— In other words, they injure me, and I them.

Theresa.— That's it, Valentine (*giving all the clothes to Romolo*). Take everything inside.

Romolo (*going towards the door, which is closed*).

Theresa.— Where are you going, Romolo? Did I not tell you always to go out and in by the back door? You must never go to your master's study, unless you are called. Don't forget again.

Romolo.— I have been here only ten days, and no one has ever told me that.

Valentine.— I told you of it. I, who consider myself your immediate superior.

Romolo (*shrugging his shoulders, exit behind the house*).

Valentine.— What shall I do, Madame Theresa, everybody laughs at me.

Theresa.— Not I, though.

Valentine.— But you are different from all the others.

Theresa (*laughing*).— Ah! ah! (*picking up her work basket, takes out all the necessary things for sewing*).

(*A silence.*)

Valentine (*still at the window, lights his pipe; then, as if seeing someone coming from the road*).— I say, whom are you looking for?

Theresa.— If it is someone who wants to see Stephen, don't let him come in. It is not time yet. I'll hide myself (*taking her work basket up quickly*).

Valentine.— Leave him to me.

Theresa (*runs away to the back of the house*).

SCENE II

VALENTINE, DON FAUSTO

(*Don Fausto who has not heard Valentine's call enters slowly from the alley, leaning on his cane. He is a stout, elderly man, with an air of authority*).

Valentine (*calling loudly*).— I say, Sir, Sir.

Don Fausto (*who begins to hear a little, looks around*).

Valentine.— Here! here! look up!

Don Fausto (*at last raises his head*).

Valentine.— Ah! It is you, Don Fausto. What are you doing here? Just wait a second. I'll be down in a minute. (*After a second he appears in the garden*).

Don Fausto.— Why, it is really you! From down here I could not see your shoulders, and I did not know who you were. I always recognize your hump better than your face.

Valentine.— I, on the other hand, can recognize you from every side of your body.

Don Fausto.— How did you come here?

Valentine.— I did not come here. I am always here. I am employed by Mr. Stephen Baldi. I am his secretary, his major-domo, his typewriter, his errand-boy. It is true that in reality I don't do much. But since he gives me food, shelter and tobacco and lets me have my freedom, I don't mind remaining with him (*comically*). When I was with you, you wished to pay me according to my work. Do you think a man like me would humiliate himself by becoming a book-keeper in your dirty soap-factory? Do you see that window with the roses? That's my room, and there I enjoy myself. When you came in, I looked at you and thought how superior I feel now to you.

Don Fausto.—I haven't heard a word of what you said. Do me the favor to speak on the left side. I can no longer hear with my right ear.

Valentine (*stepping on the left side of Don Fausto*).— How could I know you had lost one ear!

Don Fausto.— I am astonished! Everybody knows what has happened to me.

Valentine.— I did not hear of anything.

Don Fausto.—Yes, everybody knows it, because I wrote an article in the newspapers.

Valentine.— An article!

Don Fausto.— Yes, against that doctor, the specialist, who ruined my ear.

Valentine.— Indeed you always fought for your rights!

Don Fausto.— You're right there! I always punished all the scoundrels! But please repeat to me now, what you said before.

Valentine.— Never mind. The point is, I am employed by Mr. Stephen Baldi.

Don Fausto (*putting his hand on Valentine's shoulders*).— Then perhaps you are the man I am looking for. Have you any influence with this rare beast?

Valentine.— It is you, who are the rare beast.

Don Fausto.— Well, I mean this seductive poet.

Valentine.—Before you go on, you must withdraw the word 'seductive.'

Don Fausto.— All right! I'll drop the word 'seductive.'

Valentine.— Those who live at the expense of others also have some influence over them. Moreover I, besides living at his expense, am related to him. Yes, we come from the same tree!

Don Fausto.— From Adam and Eve?

Valentine (*imitating him*).— From Adam and Eve (*caressing his chin*). What a nice man you are!

Don Fausto.— Don't touch me!

Valentine.— I am a cousin in the third degree. Take off your hat on that.

Don Fausto.— I'll do that if you can make him pay me the seventeen hundred francs he owes me.

Valentine.— Did Stephen buy seventeen hundred francs' worth of soap from you?

Don Fausto.— What are you talking about? I gave up my soap-factory five years ago. My brother in law, who lost his position at the museum, and I together opened a store for antiques. Did you not know that?

Valentine.— Who would lose his time to speak about you?

Don Fausto.— But I wrote an article in the papers about it.

Valentine.— What, another one?

Don Fausto.— Nothing funny about it! What are the newspapers for, if not for tales.

Valentine.— I see you have a good opinion of newspapers.

Don Fausto.— Let me reach my point.

Valentine.— Yes, do.

Don Fausto.—Eight months ago your cousin in the third degree bought from me a frame and two chairs.

Valentine.— What! seventeen hundred francs for a frame and two chairs?

Don Fausto.— Seven hundred for the frame and five hundred for each chair.

Valentine.— Heaven knows how many a time I've sat on those five-hundred franc chairs and never noticed the difference.

Don Fausto.— I wrote him more than twenty letters.

Valentine.— And he?

Don Fausto.— He? Exactly as if I had never written to him.

Valentine (*putting his pipe in his pocket*).— Don't be offended, he is always absent-minded.

Don Fausto (*angry*).— Absent-minded?

Valentine.— You see, all the poets are absent-minded.

Don Fausto (*loudly*).— But I'll cure him!

Valentine (*petting him as one would a horse*).— Good, good Don Fausto!

Don Fausto.— Don't touch me.

Valentine.— One of these days I'll speak to him about it.

Don Fausto.— Now I need some cash, because I have to face the payment of some bills, which are due today. Therefore, by twelve o'clock, I must have all he owes me without fail.

Valentine.— It will be hard to satisfy you at twelve, because it is just the hour that Stephen is shut up in his study and cannot be disturbed.

Don Fausto.— Study or no study, if in an hour from now he has not paid his debt, I'll send a sheriff and—

Valentine (*quickly*).— Write an article in the newspapers?

Don Fausto (*firmly*).— Yes.

Valentine.— Good, and then Stephen will answer you in poetry.

Don Fausto.— And I, in prose, will call him a scoundrel!

Valentine.— How dare you?

Don Fausto.—You are provoking me.

SCENE III

DON FAUSTO, VALENTINE, THERESA

Theresa (*coming from the back of the house*).— What has happened, Valentine?

Valentine (*to Fausto*).— This is his wife. Be a gentleman with her. (*To Theresa*) Nothing, Madame Theresa, nothing serious. Here is Don Fausto Cantajello, who claims seventeen hundred francs for a frame and two chairs.

Don Fausto.— Yes, two large armchairs of the period of Henry the Fourth.

Valentine (*to Theresa*).— Yes, he means those two big armchairs— (*makes a gesture*).

Don Fausto.— That's right. Henry the Fourth himself sat in those armchairs.

Valentine.— No doubt about it. Yes, one can still see his impression on them.

Don Fausto.— The frame contained the first painting of Napoleon I.

Valentine.— I understand now why Stephen put his —

Theresa (*on the right side of Don Fausto*).— Yes, but I don't believe that my husband can pay such a sum today; could you kindly wait a few days?

Don Fausto (*who did not quite hear, to Valentine*).— What did she say?

Valentine.— To the left, to the left, Madame Theresa.

Theresa.— To the left?

Valentine.— He is deaf in the right ear. Speak to him in the left one.

Theresa (*going to the left side of Don Fausto*).— I said kindly to wait a few days.

Don Fausto.— Ah no, Madame, I have already explained everything to your husband's third cousin.

Theresa.— Valentine.

Valentine (*zealously*).— Well?

Theresa (*aside*).— You know, Stephen does not wish you to be known as his third cousin.

Valentine.— It's true! I always forget it.

Theresa (*affectionately*).— We have to respect — his ideas —

Don Fausto.— Well, Madame, what have you decided about it?

Theresa.— I don't know what to say. I never disturb my husband, when he is writing, especially today. Yes, as soon as I know he has some money —

Don Fausto.— 'When he has some money?' My dear lady, it will be too late! Fortunately (*taking the bill from his pocket*) he signed this bill, therefore he will not deny it. The time is past, and I can now act at once.

Valentine.— Sheriff — articles in the newspapers.

Theresa (*frightened*).— Heavens! What do you say?

Don Fausto.— My dear lady, I reason so! Who ever can afford such a pretty villa at Posilipo, built expressly for himself, which I know has cost him a great deal and who drives in a carriage, when I always take the car —

Valentine (*interrupting him*).— It must be trying, you who are so fat.

Don Fausto (*angry*).— Yes, I who am so fat, go on foot, but I carry my head high. What surprises me is that Mr. Stephen Baldi —

Valentine (*interrupting him*).— Drives in a carriage instead with down cast eyes.

Don Fausto.— He should go with down cast eyes, as he never keeps his word.

Theresa.— Sir, you offend us!

Don Fausto.— I don't mean to offend anyone, but when people want to take away from me the little I have made out of my own efforts, I'll defend myself.

Valentine.— Did you make Napoleon's frame by —

Don Fausto.— Precisely.

Valentine.— Then of course you are right.

Don Fausto.— Dear Madame, you see, business is very bad at present. There is such an abundance of antiquities. Yes, people want to be in the

fashion, and I hardly make my living. If I find someone wants to play me a trick I'll play mine first, and we both die in the same water. For eight months your husband has ignored me, now it is time for me to act at once.

Theresa (*trembling*).— For pity's sake, no! Listen—listen, dear sir, I'll see what I can do.

Don Fausto.— I'll give you an hour.

Theresa.— Dear Valentine, you only can help me.

Valentine.— I'll do anything for you, Madame Theresa, but what can I do?

Theresa.— Do you know any pawn shop?

Valentine.— Only a few of them.

Theresa.— Are there any here in Posilipo?

Valentine.— It is here that they are most flourishing.

Theresa.— How much do you think I can get for these earrings, that I am wearing?

Valentine.— What? Would you? —

Theresa.— It is the only thing I have.

Valentine.— It is too great a sacrifice.

Don Fausto (*understanding the situation, goes up stage, so as to let them be quite free*).

Valentine (*looking at the earrings*).— I am afraid only between eleven hundred and twelve hundred —

Theresa.— I have a hundred and ten francs saved up.

Valentine.— It's not enough yet.

Theresa.— An idea! I'll borrow it from my aunt. Yes! yes! You'll go and ask for me. She is very fond of you, and she will not deny you.

Valentine.— Do you think your aunt will give the money, because she is fond of me?

Theresa.— She was always so good to me. She took my mother's place when I was left an orphan.

Valentine.— Yes, she squandered the little you had.

Theresa.— All for my education.

Valentine.— How credulous you always are —

Theresa.— Don't let us lose any more time. I cannot bear that man's presence. Go with the earrings first (*giving her earrings to Valentine and taking out from her bosom a roll of bills*). And here are the hundred and ten francs. I had saved them up to buy a present for Stephen.

Don Fausto (*looking at them*).

Valentine (*putting everything in his pocket*).— Let us hope I may find your aunt in a good humor.

Theresa.— For pity's sake, don't discourage me.

Valentine.— I don't discourage you, I said, only let us hope. (*Beckoning to Don Fausto*) I say, you beast, come along with me.

Don Fausto (*approaching him and pointing to his left ear*).— Well?

Valentine.— We shall pay you.

Don Fausto.— I am at your service (*turning to Theresa and taking off his hat to her*), Madame.

Theresa.— Good morning, sir.

Valentine.— For once the sheriff and the newspapers will have a holiday.

Don Fausto.— I can't swear to that yet.

Valentine (*taking him by the arm, and dragging him away*).— You beast! (*Both go out from the alley.*)

Don Fausto.— What did you say I am?

Valentine (*going on his left side and taking his left arm*).— A beast!

Don Fausto.— If you wanted to say that, you could have remained on the right side.

Valentine.— No, no, my dear friend; I'll remain on the left. (*Both exit.*)

Theresa.— Don't stay long, Valentine.

Valentine's voice (*from outside*).— It will take a little time.

Theresa.— But my aunt does not live far from here.

Valentine's voice (*from outside*).— I must stay on the left side, you scoundrel!

Theresa (*quite worried sits on the bench and begins to sew*).

SCENE IV

THERESA, STEPHEN

(*Enter Stephen, a young man near thirty, very handsome and attractive.*)

Stephen (*opening the door and putting his head out*).— Theresa?

Theresa (*sweetly*) Stephen?

Stephen.— I heard some noise — some voices —

Theresa.— Yes! — It was Valentine who was talking with a man —

Stephen.— Who was it?

Theresa.— — A friend of his, I believe —

Stephen.— He should not receive his friends in my house. They always look so dirty. I'll ask you to tell him so, will you?

Theresa.— As you wish.

Stephen (*approaching Theresa and, with a certain vanity, making her smell a letter, which he holds in his hands*).

Theresa.— How sweet it smells!

Stephen.— It is a letter from the Princess Heller.

Theresa.— Who is the Princess Heller?

Stephen.—You never seem to know anything that goes on in the world. The Princess Heller is a great lady, who only a few years ago came to establish herself in Naples. Today her salon is considered the most intellectual, elegant and brilliant place in town.

Theresa.— How should I know it (*sewing*). You have never spoken to me about her —

Stephen.— I did not know her personally; I only met her yesterday at the studio of the artist Ferrantini. She calls on him.

Theresa (*without meaning*).— You met her yesterday and today she writes to you?

Stephen.— She invites me to frequent her salon.

Theresa (*sincerely*).— I am so glad! It will help you a lot.

Stephen (*a little provoked*).—You mean to say my presence will flatter her.

Theresa (*a little mortified*).— I said it will help you, because you need a little distraction.

Stephen (*in good humor*).—Now don't make the matter worse by excusing yourself. I am quite used to your silly every-day remarks.

Theresa (*sadly*).—You will end by becoming tired of me.

Stephen.—Don't fear that. Being a wife, you are all right as you are (*gently*). I always liked you just so.

Theresa.— Really?

Stephen.— Really.

Theresa (*draws herself up proudly*).

Stephen (*sitting next to her, in a loving manner*).— Tell me, dear little wife, what are you making?

Theresa.— Some aprons.

Stephen.— For the maid?

Theresa.— No, for myself.

Stephen.— For you?

Theresa.— Yes, because when one is busy around the house —

Stephen.— But I will not allow that. We have a secretary, a maid, a cook, a coachman, a man —

Theresa.— The more servants we have, the less we can trust them; especially the cook, who takes so much authority! For instance, this morning I went to verify the fruit he had bought for breakfast and —

Stephen (*closing her mouth with the palm of his hand*).— No, Theresa, I don't want to hear anything about the cook.

Theresa.— You reminded me of him. Otherwise I should never have mentioned the incident to you.

Stephen (*caressing her cheek*).— You little silly girl!

Theresa (*laughing*).— What can I do?

Stephen.— You do not even understand that in this moment I should like to see you stop sewing.

Theresa.— Immediately, dearest. (*Puts back everything in the work basket.*) But you also have been working till now, haven't you?

Stephen.— Yes, but there is a slight difference between my work and yours, don't you think so?

Theresa.— Did you work much?

Stephen.— Not very. I am working now at a very trying thing, which takes up all my vitality. One has to sacrifice himself so when his income is so meager. How I suffer! No, it cannot go on like this. No! no! I feel that this practical, narrow-minded way of living is killing my inspiration. I must write a poem, and I shall call it 'The Need of Strength.' I am sure it will make a sensation, as it will expose all the struggling ones, all the weaker minds, all the cowards, the useless beings, the silly —

Theresa (*interrupting him*).— Then me, too?

Stephen (*smiling*).— Naturally.

Theresa.— What do I care if you write against me? You will always remain my husband.

Stephen (*jokingly*).— What do you mean?

Theresa.— It means that you belong all to me.

Stephen.— I beg your pardon, not all to you.

Theresa.— But you did not talk like that last night, while you were going to sleep, with your head resting on my shoulder.

Stephen.— I was half asleep then, and I did not know what I was saying.

Theresa.— Yes, you did.

Stephen.— It seems to me you are getting a little pretentious.

Theresa.— I?

Stephen (*becoming serious*).— I don't like that.

Theresa.— I was only remembering a sentence of yours which had made me very happy.

Stephen (*angrily*).— Then you had better not repeat it, or I might be sorry to have said it.

Theresa (*sadly*).— Stephen!

Stephen.— Your favorite topics are: The aprons for the maid, the cook, or the usual stupid sentimentality.

Theresa.— But Stephen —

Stephen.— Please don't look cross now. What's the matter? Are you angry because I reproved you?

Theresa.— No, never!

Stephen.— Then smile, Theresa!

Theresa (*trying to smile*).

Stephen.— I want this day to be a beautiful one. All night I have been wishing for peace. I woke up suddenly after a terrible dream. But see how the sun and the sea smile at me. How brilliant is one and how quiet is the other. (*Taking Theresa by the hand and leading her to the sea*) Come, come, Theresa! Tell me, do you love this beautiful sea?

Theresa.— You see how blue the water is and how clear! How I should like to plunge into it and go straight to the bottom and touch the sand with my hand.

Stephen.— I, instead, should like to sail over it and go as far as possible.

SCENE V

THERESA, STEPHEN, THE OLD BEGGAR AND HIS OLD WIFE

(*The old man's voice is heard*)

Close your eyes — over the sea.
Open your eyes — over the earth.
On the earth — be in peace.
Look around — day and night.

Stephen (*to Theresa*).— Who is trying to make verses in such a funny way?

Theresa.— It is an old beggar, who comes here twice a month, and in order to make a few cents, he recites a few verses of his own composition.

Stephen.— I never saw him.

Theresa.— So that he may not disturb you, every time he comes Valentine and I send him away immediately.

(*The old man still heard singing*)

Do help a poor sailor!
Who's without boat and without net,
Who's dying of hunger and of thirst.

Theresa (*going towards the alley*).— No, no, not today, my old man.

Stephen.— Why not? — Introduce me to him.

Theresa.— All right (*calling him back*).—You can come, don't be afraid.

Stephen (*approaching Theresa*).— And who is that old woman?

Theresa.— His wife. Ah! she never leaves him.

(*The old couple enter. He is about ninety, wrinkled, bent, slow, but still strong. He is barefooted and wears a ragged jacket. On his bare neck*

he has the scapulaire of St. Lucia. He wears on his head the characteristic fisherman's cap. He also wears earrings. The old woman who accompanies him is less vivacious, and she also is dressed very poorly).

The old man.— Good day.

The old woman.— Good day, your excellencies.

Stephen (*sitting on the steps*).— Come in, valiant man. Who has taught you to compose poetry?

The old man (*gaily*).— Hunger. I sell my prattlings so that I may buy bread for my old woman.

Stephen.— So you are making money with your poetry. How much do you make every day?

The old man.— I can't complain. Do you know my saying? —

'Who has a hundred, I ask three,
Everything for you, a little for me.'

Stephen.— Before you became a poet and a beggar, were you a sailor?

The old man.— I was a fisherman.

Stephen.— Why did you leave your trade? Was the sea unfaithful to you?

The old man.— No Sir, only old age. (*Pointing to the sea*) The sea has never been unfaithful to anyone.

Over the sea — don't look,
Close your eyes — and go on,
There is a friend — near by you,
Close your eyes — and go on.

Stephen.— And who is the friend on the sea?

The old man.— I am only prattling, you know.

Stephen.— Then the friend does not exist?

The old man.— Yes, he does exist — It is Death.

Stephen.— And do you call Death a friend?

The old man.— Yes, Sir (*sweetly*). Because it is God who sends it.

Stephen (*comically*).— You are all right. But I must reward your poetical work. Do you wish some money? Much? (*giving a handful of pennies.*) Take them.

The old man (*happy*).— God bless you! —

The old woman (*happy*).— God bless you! —

Theresa.— Only a cent from me, as I am not as rich as he is. (*Giving the cent.*)

The old man (*quite moved*).— But you are always good to us. (*Turning to the old woman*) Ready!

(*The old man begins to dance, murmuring:*

Lla, lla, lla,
Lla, lla, lla —

while the old woman keeps him in time, by clapping her hands.)

Stephen.— What's that?

Theresa.— They always express their thanks with a little dance. (*To the old people*) It is sufficient.

Stephen (*laughing*).— Let them go on, they are quite amusing.

Theresa.— No, I say stop.

(*The old people stop immediately. Valentine's voice is heard outside*).

SCENE VI

STEPHEN, THERESA, THE OLD MAN, THE OLD WOMAN AND VALENTINE

Valentine (*approaching*).— Victory, victory, Madame Theresa! Victory!

Theresa (*makes a movement of joy, then immediately tries to control herself*).

Stephen.— What's the trouble with Valentine?

Valentine.— Victory! Victory! (*Enters from the alley, and seeing Stephen, stops suddenly, looking embarrassed*).

(*A silence*).

Stephen (*to Valentine*).— Will you please tell me what heroic action you have accomplished?

Theresa (*behind Stephen makes a gesture to Valentine so as to keep him quiet*).

Valentine (*to Stephen*).— What action?

Stephen.— Were you not screaming "Victory, victory?"

Valentine.— I was screaming 'Victory, victory,' because I was quite excited about some one — What's his name? An ex-officer, a good boy — A friend of mine?

Stephen.— The same one who was here in the Park?

Theresa (*makes another gesture to Valentine*).

Valentine.— Yes, that same one, we were talking about war!

Stephen.— About war!

Valentine.— It is you who have inspired me to talk about war, and since then I always talk about arms, war, victory —

Stephen.— What stories are these, Rigoletto? Are you now a jester?

Valentine.— We do what we can to please your majesty.

Stephen.— Be careful, you have a competitor. (*Pointing to the old man*). Your colleague amused me more.

Valentine.— As a beggar and a jester he is my colleague, but as a poet he becomes yours.

Stephen (*laughing*).— Don't be impertinent, or I'll throw you into the water.

Valentine (*laughing*).— Heaven knows! Today I feel like jesting, and I might throw you into it instead!

Stephen (*still laughing*).— And would you dare to attack your master?

Valentine.— Yes, with both my hands.

Stephen.— You scoundrel, you shall be sorry for talking like that!

Valentine.— Perhaps I will tomorrow, not today.

Stephen.— I'll put you to the test.

Valentine (*posing like a gladiator*).— I am ready!

Stephen (*runs up stage and sits on the parapet, turning his shoulders to the sea*).

Theresa.— Be careful, Stephen.

Stephen (*folding his arms comically*).— Come on, if you have the courage.

Valentine (*running to him*).— Your end is come!

Theresa (*screaming*).

Valentine (*turning quickly*).— Madame Theresa? —

Stephen (*running to her*).— What's the matter?

Theresa.— No — no — don't play such tricks any more! (*Very pale*). Oh, my God! I was so afraid! It was horrible!

Stephen.— Are you serious?

Valentine (*sorry*).— I beg your pardon, Madame Theresa! What a fool I am!

Stephen.— Am I not right to call you silly?

Theresa (*embraces him*).

Valentine (*seeing the old couple, who are still waiting*).— What are you doing here? Are you going to stay here all day? Go away, go away! (*The old couple, without answering, exit from the alley*).

Stephen (*to Theresa, caressing her hair*).— If I ran into danger, what would you do?

Theresa.— I should die.

Valentine (*discreetly exits into the house*).

Stephen.— Why do you still tremble? Are you still afraid? — I am here — You are embracing me — holding me —

Theresa.— I am afraid that I annoyed you with my childish fear.

Stephen (*affectionately*).— No, Theresa, this time you did not annoy me! (*with pride*). You will never annoy me, when you make me feel how much you value me and appreciate my intellect and what I can do.

Theresa.— Oh, Stephen! What a comfort this is to me! (*kissing him gratefully*).

Valentine (*again appears at the window with his pipe, laughing*).— What are you doing there?

Stephen (*seeing Valentine*).— Ah, you are there, rascal?

Valentine.— I am smoking! (*showing the pipe*).

Stephen.— Down the pipe, when in front of the 'Triumph of Love!'

Valentine.— Down Love when in front of the 'Triumph of a pipe!'

Stephen.— I defy you! (*kissing Theresa*).

Valentine.— And I'll crush you with roses! (*throws one after the other the roses he has on his window*). You must surrender! Surrender! Surrender.

Theresa and Stephen (*under the rain of roses, keep on kissing each other and laughing*).

Valentine (*laughing*).— Surrender!

ACT II

Stephen Baldi's studio, very elegant and artistic. A door on the left, one on the right, and another up stage on the right, which is the general entrance. In the center up stage a large door which opens from the inside, upon the same terrace seen in the first act. There is a step outside, which must not be omitted, being part of the business. The room is very quiet. There are book-cases all around full of books. On the left side a large desk. beautifully carved. Almost in the middle a sofa. Here and there valuable bric-a-brac, flowers, etc. It is night. Only one electric lamp is lighted.

SCENE I

VALENTINE AND ROMOLO

(*Valentine enters from the terrace, dressed in an evening suit, wearing over it, a rather shabby light overcoat, also an old high hat. He looks quite busy*).

Romolo! Romolo! (*rings the electric bell*). Where are you? — Madame Theresa! —

Romolo (*enters from the general entrance, with his habitual indolent air*).— If Madame Theresa does not answer, it means she is not in.

Valentine.— Impossible!

Romolo.— She has gone out.

Valentine.— When?

Romolo.— An hour after Mr. Baldi.

Valentine.— That's funny!

Romolo.— Why? Had she to ask your permission?

Valentine.— Don't be impertinent. I forbid you to ask me questions. Remember I am the secretary of the most celebrated poet.

Romolo.— All — right —

Valentine.— Mind your own business.

Romolo.— All right!

Valentine.— Your master orders you to put on your livery, to light up all the lanterns in the Park, illuminate the parlor, as he will be here shortly, with a most distinguished person.

Romolo.— And you, are you going to put on your livery?

Valentine.— Impertinent!

Romolo (*exit from general entrance*).

Valentine (*taking off his hat, comically*).— And I will light up the shrine. (*Turns the key of the electric light full force*).

SCENE II

VALENTINE AND THERESA

(*Enter Theresa from the general entrance, looking quite agitated and upset. Seeing Valentine, goes quickly to him.*)

Theresa.— Tell me? — All his success — the enthusiasm —

Valentine (*impressed by her strange manner*).— Why do you say enthusiasm?

Theresa.— Because I am sure he had it.

Valentine.— By the way! Did not the Princess Heller invite you too?

Theresa.— Not directly, because we don't know each other! Yet she kindly told Stephen she would be glad to see me too.

Valentine.— Well?

Theresa.— At the last moment, when I was ready, he refused to take me along.

Valentine.— Why?

Theresa.— My dress was not elegant enough, not in fashion, I looked like a servant girl.

Valentine.— Did he say you looked like a servant girl?

Theresa.— Yes.

Valentine.— Indeed he treats you badly!

Theresa.— No, Valentine, he is right, and no one should judge him. The Princess had invited all the very best people in his honor. What would they have said about us if they had seen me dressed in such poor taste?

Valentine.— Then you should not be so stingy about yourself. Why

don't you ask Stephen to give you a few thousand francs, and then order your dresses in Paris?

Theresa.— Not in Paris, but I've already found a good dressmaker and have ordered a splendid gown. Now that Stephen is received in society, if it happens that I am asked, I shall be ready.

Valentine.— When did you order your gown?

Theresa.— Tonight.

Valentine.— Did you go out for that?

Theresa.— Yes.

Valentine.— Was it so pressing that you could not wait till tomorrow?

Theresa (*mortified, trying to excuse herself*).— When I remained alone I felt so depressed, humiliated! I tore to pieces that horrible dress which prevented me from going with my Stephen. I believe I even fainted, for I found myself lying on the floor, and felt a strange sensation in seeing all the things most familiar to me. But as soon as I had my strength back I ran to the dressmaker immediately. Do you see anything strange in that?

Valentine.— There is nothing strange about that, yet it worries me. Lately you've been so nervous — So — You're taking Stephen's behavior towards you too much to heart.

Theresa (*dissimulating*).— I am not suffering.

Valentine.— Yes, you are, you're losing your health. What you just told me confirms what I said.

Theresa.— Please don't tell Stephen of it?

Valentine.— Don't worry, besides it would be hard now to speak to him about such details, after he has been called a 'Great Poet' by the Princess Heller!

Theresa (*taking off her hat*).— Tell me, did he look happy?

Valentine.— I should think so! It was an apotheosis!

Theresa.— A well deserved one.

Valentine.— Perhaps. For my part I never understood his verses, and tonight when he recited them, still less. But I don't count.

Theresa.— You and I cannot understand him. If he should write only for us he could not be called a genius.

Valentine.— There were a good many prominent people there at the house of the Princess tonight. Even the Secretary —

Theresa.— Of Public Education?

Valentine.— No, of war. This princess, whom nobody knows any thing about, has conquered pretty nearly the whole world. Her house tonight was crowded with reporters, writers, artists; even an editor had come expressly from Milan. Several dozens of marquises, counts, a quan-

tity of beautiful women wearing gowns cut as low as that (*making an exaggerated gesture*). And everyone surrounded Stephen, especially after he had read his poem 'The Need of Strength.'

Theresa (*quite excited, interrupting him*).— And she — the Princess? —

Valentine.— A queen bowing to the Emperor.

Theresa.— She must be an angel.

Valentine.— I am afraid too much so.

Theresa.— They say she is beautiful.

Valentine.— So, so, you shall judge because she is coming here tonight.

Theresa.— Here tonight? (*clapping her hands*). How glad I am! You are joking, Valentine. Are you?

Valentine.— You don't think I am capable of doing so? Princess Heller has expressed a desire to take him home in her carriage, and to visit his studio.

Theresa.— Then it is true?

Valentine.— Of course.

Theresa.— But you don't look as happy as I.

Valentine.— Of course I am (*clapping his hands as she had done before*). How glad I am!

Theresa.— We must prepare everything.

Valentine.— I came expressly in advance so as to prepare for the reception.

Theresa (*looking outside*).— I see the lanterns are lighted.

Valentine.— Yes.

Theresa.— I must put his desk in order; and those books on the chair —

Valentine.— Leave them — they make the room more interesting.

Theresa.— Did you give your orders to Romolo?

Valentine.— I told him to dress for the occasion.

Theresa.— We should have some flowers.

Valentine.— This is not a wedding.

Theresa.— And I? — With this shabby dress —

Valentine.— But you are in your own house.

Theresa.— Never mind, but I am not presentable.

Valentine.— To my mind, yes.

Theresa.— Don't forget I am Stephen Baldi's wife!

Valentine.— You have a hard position.

Theresa.— You are only his secretary, yet you are wearing your evening suit?

Valentine.— I can lend it to you.

Theresa.— Stop joking. I must go and dress, I'll be back in a moment.

Valentine.— It is too late, I hear the carriage (*running to the door*). Yes, here she is.

Theresa.— Dear me, what shall I do?
Valentine.— Nothing at all. Go to meet them as you are.
Theresa.— To receive them? Never!
Valentine.— It is your duty.
Theresa.— No! no! Stephen might scold me!
Valentine.— You are worse than a child!
Theresa (*trying to look outside*).— How beautiful she is!
Valentine.— I told you she was so-so. But she uses too much perfume.
Theresa.— And how happy he looks, he seems taller, thinner —
Valentine.— Precisely! In three hours he has grown thinner and taller.
Theresa.— Here they come, I must hide myself.
Valentine.— You must stay.
Theresa.— *Then remain also.*

SCENE III

THERESA, VALENTINE, STEPHEN, MERALDA

(*Stephen is in evening dress, and wearing a white flower in his buttonhole. Meralda is a beautiful woman past thirty, very fascinating and very stylish.*)

Meralda's voice.— Before entering your sacred temple, how I would like to feel worthy of your intellect.

Stephen's voice.— It is I, Princess, who am not worthy of your kindness.

Meralda (*entering, letting her beautiful opera cloak slip from her shoulders, goes to his desk immediately*).

Stephen (*helps her with the cloak immediately, and when he goes to put it on the chair, he sees Theresa and Valentine*).—I thought you were in bed!

Valentine (*interfering*).— She was anxious to know all about it.

Stephen.— I did not ask your opinion. Go.

(*Valentine exit.*)

Meralda (*who has heard the whispering, turns*).

Stephen (*introducing them against his will*).— Princess — My wife.

Theresa (*advancing timidly and bowing awkwardly*).—Princess.

Meralda (*giving her hand unaffectedly*).— I am very glad to meet you. I often tried to find out in your husband's writings something which would point me out the fortunate woman whom he had chosen as his companion (*looking at her steadily*). Fate has given you a very difficult task, indeed, which however is envied by others.

Theresa (*timidly*).— In fact I am very happy.

Meralda.— And very proud of him, I am sure.

Theresa.— Yes, very proud!

Meralda (*laughing a little at her*).— Or perhaps the continual intimacy makes you undervalue the great privilege you have.

Theresa.— No, no! — on the contrary! —

Meralda.— It would be natural if you felt like that, though.

Theresa.— —— How can you think so?

Meralda.— You might have wished for a husband less immersed in his ideals, less independent, more a home body —

Theresa.— We have always been good comrades; you are accusing him unjustly.

Stephen.— Theresa, you don't understand what the Princess means. You should not defend me.

Theresa.— I know you don't need my defense, yet I must do it, if they accuse you.

Stephen (*trying not to lose his patience*).

Meralda.— But I did not accuse him.

Theresa.— I should not like —

Stephen (*interrupting her*).— Don't insist, Theresa.

Meralda (*in a mocking tone*).— Let her talk.

Theresa (*to Meralda*).— Ah! you are becoming my friend. (*Taking courage.*) Please be seated, Princess. Pardon me for not offering you a chair before (*pointing to the sofa*). Do sit there. (*Meralda sits on the sofa. Theresa taking a low chair sits next to her and goes on talking with animation.*) You are so interested in my Stephen, that I must explain how things are, I know I am silly, and he often says it to me, yet I am not so silly as not to understand that he is not an ordinary husband. He goes here and there, but in the end he always returns to his little wife for rest. If sometime you could only see him, how he laughs and jests like a child and falls asleep like a tired baby (*not paying any attention to him*). What more could I wish? My only sorrow is that I have no children, yet —

Stephen.— Enough!

Meralda (*to Stephen*).— But why?

Stephen.— She is tiring you.

Meralda.— Not a bit of it, she is amusing me.

Theresa (*looking at her, sadly astonished — a brief silence*).

Meralda.— Go on.

Theresa (*rising*).— No, Princess, no; will you excuse me?

Meralda.— Why?

Theresa.— I am not feeling well.

Stephen (*looking at Theresa severely*).

Meralda.— Do sit again.

Theresa (*trembling under Stephen's looks*).—Good night, Princess —

Meralda.— Good by, Madame.
Theresa (*exit from right door*).

SCENE IV

MERALDA, STEPHEN

Stephen.— I beg of you, Meralda, not to pity me.

Meralda.— She is sweet. She must be very affectionate also and good —But no doubt it is a hybrid union.

Stephen.— Let us speak of something else, Meralda.

Meralda.— If I am your friend — your best friend, you should confide in me the mystery of your choice.

Stephen.— Simply hazard.

Meralda.— A rebel like you consented to obey?

Stephen.— I did not take the trouble to rebel in this episode, to which I do not attach material importance.

Meralda.— It seems to me this episode would have had some influence on your life.

Stephen.— I never allowed a woman to influence my life, not even you, who are the most complete woman I have ever known, still less then, the poor creature you have just met. Therefore you must not demand from me what's against my nature. When I married I did not know myself. If I had met a superior woman I should perhaps have found courage to tell her my rights of supremacy; but even at that time, my instinct guided me. Theresa's humility attracted me. You may detect from the simple story of my marriage my real temperament. I warn you it will be impossible to change me. Are you satisfied?

Meralda (*with resignation*).— I am satisfied.

Stephen.— Is it peace or war?

Meralda.— Peace. I surrender. I lay down my arms, and here is my white flag. I'll accept your terms, and from now on, if you wish (*sadly*) I'll become another episode. I am satisfied that the artist has opened the door of his temple to me and am resigned to the man's indifference.

Stephen (*gallantly*).— Why do you speak about indifference? I am very far from sacrificing all the facts regarding the existence of love. Indeed I wish to awaken my energy again and to become the slave of morality and civilization. I say to the woman: 'If you come to me to put a limit to my independence I repudiate you, but if you will be a source of triumph and if you will nourish my ideals with your sensibility, you are welcome. I was waiting for you, my charming guest. So long as you are mine, you will not feel my supremacy!'

Meralda.— Well (*sighing*) — the most complete woman whom you have ever known agrees with you (*letting her handkerchief fall*).

Stephen (*picking it up, kneels in front of her, and remains in this position for a few seconds*).— The proudest man is at your feet.

Meralda.— I let my handkerchief fall so as to have that illusion.

Stephen.— To have this pretext, I pick it up (*offering it to her*).

Meralda (*taking it*).

Stephen (*kissing her hand*).

Meralda.— Thank you.

Stephen (*rising*).

Meralda (*quickly rising too*).— Did you ever ask yourself if in my personality there is something different from what people see in me?

Stephen.— You are as I see you.

Meralda.— And — My past does not worry you?

Stephen.— No.

Meralda.— Therefore you are satisfied to know what everybody knows; that is — I was born in a small town near Venice, and that my family, though noble, were poor; and that very young I married a rich German —

Stephen.— —— And that at twenty-four years old you were left a widow, noble, a millionaire, and alone. It seems to me you have already given many details of your past.

Meralda (*trying to scrutinize his thoughts*).— Don't you mistrust such an exacting story?

Stephen.— No.

Meralda.— I am sorry.

Stephen.— Why?

Meralda.— You should understand that a woman like me is tormented by curiosity to know if she could still rely on the affection of her chosen friend, even without all the glitter and admiration which surrounds her.

Stephen.— My loyalty to you, Meralda, should convince you of my sentiments. What would you say if I also doubted your sincerity, especially tonight, after my triumph, after the admiration which I was able to arouse in your friends? You say you would like to leave your title for a day or an hour and be a simple woman. But why underestimate and destroy your power? No! You must remain as you are.

Meralda (*disappointed*).— I shall obey you and remain as I am. (*In a changed tone.*) Will you take me to the carriage, my conqueror?

Stephen.— I am your slave!

Meralda (*smiles*).

Stephen.— Sometimes I shall be more obedient than a slave.

Meralda (*smiling and caressing him with the point of her fan*).— My cloak, please.

Stephen (*takes the cloak and helps her with it, murmuring, Are you mine?*)

Meralda.— Alas, yes!

Stephen.— And I? — am yours.

Meralda.— Alas, no!

Stephen (*offering his arm, they go out from the general entrance*).—This is the shortest way.

Meralda.— Out?

Stephen.— And in.

(*Both go out*)

SCENE V

VALENTINE, STEPHEN, THERESA, THEN ROMOLO.

Valentine (*enters, laughing*).— Madame Theresa! The Goddess is gone! (*Comically*) The wife of this great man always disappears! (*Exit on the right, calling Madame Theresea, Madame Theresa!*)

Stephen (*entering*).— Where are you going?

Valentine (*returning*).— I saw you accompanying the Princess to the carriage. I came back here to talk with your wife; not finding her, I went to hunt her up.

Stephen.— If you think I am in a mood now to listen to your prattle you're mistaken.

Valentine.— All right!

Stephen.— If you only knew how tired I am of always listening to your silly talk. Ah, the joy of living alone!

Valentine (*earnestly*).— Listen to me: when Madame Theresa comes in; please don't scold her. She is already much upset.

Stephen.— You always exaggerate!

Valentine.— If you knew what she did tonight!

Stephen.— What did she do?

Valentine.— Hush, here she comes!

Theresa (*entering, looking pale, as if she had been crying;— to Stephen*).—Did you call me?

Stephen (*trying not to be cross*).— No, Theresa.

Theresa.— Do you wish me to go back to my room?

Stephen.— We have nothing to say to each other. When you are excited like that I prefer to avoid you.

Theresa.— Excited?

Stephen.— Yes, Valentine was telling me how strangely you acted tonight.

Valentine (*angry at his imprudence*).

Theresa.— I was happy in your success.

Stephen.— And why are you crying, then?

Valentine (*aside*).— I must go, or there will be trouble.

(*Exit to the terrace*).

Theresa.— The Princess offended me.

Stephen.— She had no intention of doing so. You looked so awkward that unwittingly she showed her impression. You will learn to remain in your room. You should use more tact, and not put me in such embarrassing positions. And to think that you believe yourself a perfect wife!

Theresa.— I haven't that illusion. But you must teach me. What shall I do?

Stephen.— I haven't the time to teach you what to do. Try to control yourself.

Theresa.— I should like to know in what I displease you?

Stephen.— For instance, now; your tears provoke me.

Theresa.— Then I shall laugh. Yes, of course you're right, I looked very awkward. And now I must laugh (*forcing herself to laugh.*)

Stephen.— It's enough.

Theresa.— But I am indeed much amused!

Valentine (*enters*).— When I am not here they are in good humor.

Theresa.— I say, Valentine, did I not look funny? (*Laughing very hysterically.*)

Valentine.— She is hysterical.

Stephen.— Mind your business. You should respect me! (*Theresa stops laughing at once and falls on a chair.*)

Valentine.— I always try to respect you.

Stephen.— I am not speaking about you.

Theresa.— Then, you mean me?

Stephen.— In order to keep up my work, I must concentrate all my thoughts, all my ideals. I must reject all affections, all the silly annoyances. If my wife was not such an ordinary little creature, she would remain at my side and watch me silently. Indeed, that would be a proof of her respect.

Theresa.— If it is for your good, I shall disappear entirely.

Stephen.— Bravo! Now you are contemplating suicide!

Theresa.— No, Stephen, not that. I was thinking of going away.

Stephen.— Where?

Theresa.— I don't know — to a convent.

Stephen.— Convent?

Theresa.— Or to my aunt's.

Stephen.— Naturally — I — I could not prevent you from going there.

Of course not for always, but for a little while. She lives so near here. Then I could finish my work. And after a few months of separation, you would come back a better wife.

Theresa (*crying*).— I shall go for good. You're tired of me, I know it.

Stephen.— Now, don't begin to cry again!

Valentine.— Good gracious! You're sending her away, and you don't want her to cry!

Stephen (*exasperated*).— Ah! (*exit on the right, slamming the door*).

Theresa (*crying*).— He cannot bear my presence any longer!

Valentine.— Tomorrow morning the storm will be past.

Theresa.— I'd better go. I am not worthy of him. He will be free.

Valentine.— Tomorrow morning he will be all right again.

Theresa.— I must go now or tomorrow morning I shall not have the courage to go.

Valentine.— You must not go.

Theresa.— I must not spoil his life, or I shall regret it, and he will hate me like an enemy. No, I must go (*looking strangely*).

Valentine.— Now, don't excite yourself.

Theresa (*quite excited*).— You don't see anything, but I see! —Quick, quick! The carriage is still waiting oustide, I must take this opportunity and go at once! (*Taking her hat, which is on the chair, and putting it on, trembling.*)

Valentine.— For pity's sake, Madame Theresa, be yourself. (*Going to the door.*) Stephen! Madame Theresa wants to go, Stephen!

Theresa.— You see, he does not answer.

Valentine.— Stephen! —

Theresa (*looking at the door*).

Valentine (*anxiously waiting for the answer, not daring to call again*).

(*A silence*)

Theresa (*with resignation.*— He does not answer.

Valentine.— After all, you are going to your aunt, you say for always, but I am convinced only for one night. (*Taking hat and coat.*) And I'll come with you.

Theresa.— No, I want you to remain with him. He is so nervous tonight.

Valentine.— But I'll be back immediately.

Theresa.— I shall be more at ease if you remain.

Valentine (*trying to follow her*).

Theresa (*turning*).— I implore you to remain! (*Theresa on the threshold of the door, which opens upon the terrace.*) Tell Stephen — that — even at a distance, I shall only live for him, and some day if he will forgive

me for having annoyed him, I shall be very grateful to him. Good by, Valentine.

Valentine (*drying a tear*).— No, this will never do. (*Goes to the door, murmurs, she is gone.*) (*Slowly returns, rings the bell.*)

(*Enter Romolo, half asleep*)

Valentine.— Did you close the gate?

Romolo.— I did.

Valentine.— You can go to bed. I'll close up here.

(*Romolo exit*)

Valentine (*closing the door*).

(*Enter Stephen, wearing a smoking jacket. He is quite agitated*)

Valentine.— You're too late. Madame Theresa is gone.

Stephen.— I heard her.

Valentine.— She took your carriage to go to her aunt's.

Stephen.— I thought you went with her.

Valentine.— She refused to have me. (*After a silence.*) You're ungrateful.

Stephen (*nervously*).— Ungrateful? Why? To whom? I don't owe anything to anyone! And I don't need anyone!

Valentine.— Not even her?

Stephen.— Her less than the others.

Valenitne.— Yes, and why then do you look so worried?

Stephen.— I am worried, because, perhaps she is suffering. I am not so hard as you think. But she is not indispensable to my life.

Valentine (*firmly*).— The humblest woman may be indispensable to the proudest man.

Stephen (*bitterly*).— Your philosophy is absurd. Go to the devil!

(*A silence*)

Stephen (*sitting near his desk*).

Valentine.— Are you going to work?

Stephen.— Yes.

Valentine.— *Can* you work?

Stephen (*proudly, but not sincerely*).— Yes.

Valentine (*lights the lamp on the desk and puts out the others*).

Stephen (*forcing himself to write*).

Valentine.— Good night. (*Going out left, stopping suddenly*) Stephen!— Somebody is scratching at the door!

Stephen.— Who is it?

Valentine.— The noise is coming from there. (*Going to the door.*)

Stephen (*pushing him aside, opens the door himself*).

Theresa (*who was leaning at the door, convulsively, without her hat, her*

hair hanging, as soon as the door opens falls on her knees, on account of the step, which is outside).

Stephen (screaming).— Theresa! *(taking her in his arms, carries her to the sofa).*

Valentine (trembling, looking at them, not daring to approach her).

Theresa (without uttering a word, with her eyes open).

Stephen.— Theresa! — Why don't you speak?

Theresa (almost as if awakening).— I saw — I saw — a lost child in the woods *(changing tone)* — The wind was blowing. *(Sweetly.)* Everything in the world is beautiful.

Stephen.— Valentine! — What's that?

Valentine (in agony).— Good God!

Theresa.— Everything in the world is beautiful.

ACT III

The same scene as the second act. The action takes place in the afternoon. The door up stage is open.

SCENE I

VALENTINE, THEN THE OLD BEGGAR

Valentine (smoking his pipe, while he is busy pasting some paper on a cardboard.)— Work helps a man to be noble, therefore, I, being a man *(holding up the cardboard)* — Yes, it looks all right, it is large enough for all the words I wish to write on it *(laying his cardboard on the floor again, begins to spell with his finger the words he intends to write)*: 'From today, this villa for sale, with all the furniture.' No, there are too many words. I'll cut out 'From today'; anyhow they'll understand just the same. *(Rises and takes a large inkstand and a brush, then begins to write.)*

The old man's voice.— Who has a hundred, I ask three —
Everything for you, a little for me.

Valentine.— Oh, oh! My colleague is still alive!

The old man's voice.— Do help a poor sailor.

(He appears, coming through the Park, older looking and more tired.)

Valentine.— Come in, dear colleague, come in. I cannot come to welcome you in the Park, because I am busy working. You never work, do you? If you will honor me with your brilliant conversation, I shall be very happy.

The old man (entering).— Who's without boat and without net,
Who's dying of hunger — and of thirst.

Valentine.— This is the old stuff. Have you invented anything new? You've been absent for two years, haven't you?

The old man.— Yes, two years.

Valentine.— And you have not composed anything new?

The old man.— What do you say?

Valentine.— I understand. We are expecting too much from these poets. And where is your charming wife?

The old man.— She is dead.

Valentine.— That's why you look so sad. Well, she had to go first, she was less strong than you.

The old man.— She did not die a natural death.

Valentine.— How did she die?

The old man.— Under a car.

Valentine.— Truly?

The old man.— Down there, at the turn of the street.

Valentine.— It was horrible.

The old man.— If God had called her naturally — but die in that way (*crying*) — No, no.

Valentine.— And why did you not come here any more?

The old man.— That same day they put me in prison.

Valentine.— In prison?

The old man.— Yes, at the old man's home.

Valentine.— I see, and then they sent you away?

The old man.— No, I ran away.

Valentine.— You were wrong. At least you had a bed and something to eat.

The old man.— My liberty, sir, my liberty first of all!

Valentine.— I understand one has to live.

The old man.— There are so many kind-hearted people in the world who are ready to help you. If one says 'No,' the other says 'Yes,' and a good many never say 'No.'

Valentine (*putting his hand in his pocket*).— I generally say 'no,' because I don't pretend to have a kind heart, but today, to make an exception, I shall say 'Yes' (*giving him a cent*). And now go (*begins to work again*).

The old man (*trying to dance again*).—

Lla, lla, lla.

(*but he cannot go on*).

Valentine.— Never mind, that's all right.

The old man.— I cannot do it any more. She who helped me is gone.

(*A pause*)

Valentine.— If you are hoping to get more money you are mistaken.

Your other colleague in literature is not at home, and Madame, I am afraid, will never recognize you.

The old man.— You're joking (*laughing*).

Valentine.— No, I am not.

The old man.— She was very kind to me.

Valentine.— Things do not always go as we want. Down there your wife died under a car; here in Posilipo your kind lady has lost her mind.

The old man.— You like to joke!

Valentine.— All right.

SCENE II

VALENTINE, THE OLD MAN, THERESA

Theresa (*from inside*).— Who's stepping on my train? You are spoiling my beautiful gown.

The old man (*to Valentine*).— Now you shall see how kind she will be to me.

Theresa (*enters from the right. She wears a beautiful evening gown. Her hair is untidy, and strangely arranged with flowers and curls. She wears a pair of old shoes, walks slowly, looking at her train. She is very pale, but she does not look as if she were suffering*).

The old man (*bowing*).— I am the poor sailor —

Valentine.— Keep quiet (*to Theresa*). Be careful, Madame Theresa, this is ink. I had better move (*picks up the inkstand, and puts everything away on the desk*). I am afraid I shall spoil your dress.

Theresa.— You're very kind. Who's taught you to be so?

Valentine.— I learned it from you.

Theresa.— Where did you meet me?

Valentine.— I believe everywhere.

Theresa.— How was I dressed?

Valentine (*putting aside the books and newspapers so as to make a place on the desk.*)— Not like today. Today you are very elegant.

Theresa.— I know it.

Valentine.— You have a beautiful dress.

Theresa.— Thank you (*looking at the dress*).

The old man (*trying to attract her attention, begins to recite*).—

Close your eyes — over the sea,
Open your eyes — over the earth.

Theresa (*when she hears these words, she turns suddenly around and ends the strophe in the same monotonous way given by the old man*) —

On the earth — be in peace,
Look around — day and night.

Valentine (*surprised, aside*).— How strange!

The old man (*happy to be remembered*).— You see! You see!

Theresa (*approaches and examines him*).

Valentine (*much interested, goes to her so as to make another experiment*).— Madame Theresa, do you wish these pennies to give to the beggar? (*Giving the money.*)

Theresa (*mechanically takes them, and looks around as if looking for somebody else*).

Valentine (*pointing to the old man*).— There he is.

The old man (*stretches out his hand*).

Theresa (*smiles at him, then hesitating*).

Valentine.— Well?

Theresa.— By and by.

The old man (*discouraged*).— I have no more luck since I lost my old woman.

Valentine.— She said by and by she will give them to you. (*To Theresa.*) Won't you?

Theresa (*sweetly*).— I don't know.

Valentine.—Yes, you must; you were one of those who never said 'No.'

Theresa.— I am too little! —

Valentine.— Yes! — (*looks at her for a second, then shrugs his shoulders and returns to work*).

'This villa is for sale with all the furniture.'

Theresa (*to the old man*).—You also are very kind.

SCENE III

VALENTINE, THERESA, THE OLD MAN, STEPHEN

(*Enter Stephen from the terrace, looking thinner and sad. He does not notice the old man, who bows to him, but in passing near Theresa looks at her more sharply than pitifully. He sits down immediately, near his desk.*)

Valentine.— Did you walk much?

Stephen.— Yes.

Theresa (*seeing Stephen, she becomes a little frightened as if fearing he may scold her. Putting her finger to her lips, approaches the old man*).— Hush! Hush! Come with me. (*Taking him by the arm, both exit upon the terrace, she murmuring, don't make any noise*).

Stephen (*watching Theresa from the corner of his eyes*).— Has she been here long?

Valentine.— Madame Theresa?

Stephen.— Of course!

Valentine.— Only a few minutes.

Stephen (*mistrustfully*).— Was she talking — to the old man? —

Valentine.— Yes, to him and to me.

Stephen.— And she went out because I came in?

Valentine.— I am afraid one would become insane if one should try to find any connection either in her actions or in your words.

Stephen.— No, if she does that there is a connection.

Valentine (*trying to change the conversation*).— Should we hang this on the gate or in the window? I should suggest the gate, it will be seen more. Don't you think it looks fine? I am sure we'll get a lot of offers as soon as we put it out.

Stephen.— Don't bother any more. The villa is sold.

Valentine.— What! And for once I worked so hard! (*throwing aside the cardboard.*) When you decided to sell this place, had you already an offer?

Stephen.— Yes, a very good one.

Valentine.— Then, I understand, the buyer is a woman?

Stephen.— Don't insinuate so idiotically.

Valentine.— I may be an idiot, yet Princess Heller was very enthusiastic about this place, and if you sold it to her you would have the privilege of seeing it again often, and perhaps find a commemorative stone set in your honor.

Stephen.— I am no longer on good terms with her, since the scandal which revealed her origin and intrigues. You know it, still you take pleasure in throwing the whole circumstance in my face.

Valentine.— In other words, I am a tyrant! But I was speaking in good faith. So there was a scandal? And your friendship is broken? And you never see each other? My congratulations! Now, I am only sorry you were too quick in arranging the deal.

Stephen.— The purchaser is a rich man.

Valentine.— Who is he?

Stephen.— Mr. Marcolini.

Valentine.— A banker?

Stephen.— No, a brewer.

Valentine.— Dear me! I should have preferred at least a banker. I am surprised that you should know such vulgar people.

Stephen.— One of my lawyer's clients.

Valentine.— Is it that fat old man who came here yesterday with a pretty young wife? She is all right, she will enjoy this place.

Stephen.— You seem in a good humor today.

Valentine.— Well, you see, I depend on you.

Stephen.— And do you expect me still to go on taking care of you?

Valentine.— Now you will have money from Mr. Marcolini.

Stephen.— But I have debts to pay off.

Valentine.— But if you sold this place for a good price? It's true you have not done a thing for two years. You wished so much liberty, and when you got it, you remained without inspiration. (*Trying to encourage him.*) You will be all right, and I am sure you will soon be able to regain what you have lost. It will not be necessary either to write that famous poem which you say is going to astonish the world. Take my advice, throw this (*taking the manuscript*) in the fire, and begin life anew. You're still well known.

Stephen.— Ah! I am still well known.

Valentine.— They have not forgotten you yet. I often read your name in the newspapers and magazines —

Stephen.— They only remember me in their denunciation; they reproach my silence, my presumption, my incompetence.

Valentine.— Let them say what they like, but do something else.

Stephen.— What?

Valentine.— Become a newspaper man. It pays well, and it is a very easy profession.

Stephen.— It is the profession of 'lies,' and to be a good liar you must have talent.

Valentine.— But you have that.

Stephen.— You feel it is your duty to flatter me? Once you were paid for that, but no more now. Flattery hurts me, poisons me! Where is my talent gone? Where? I cannot find it, either for the poem I once wished to create or for the simplest verse! I have spent night after night, and you know it, at this desk, looking for an idea, but in vain. I am incapable of thinking. I feel the agony of my poor brain. The terrible truth is that my machine has lost its 'power.'

(*A silence*)

(*From outside the old man is heard singing*)—

Lla, lla, lla,
Lla, lla, lla —

(*Theresa, also from outside, repeats the song, clapping her hands so as to keep time.*)

Lla, lla, lla,
Lla, lla, lla.

Valentine.— It is she (*looking outside*).

Stephen.— What is she doing?

Valentine.— She goes with him towards the gate, and the old man is dancing. Evidently she gave him a penny.

Stephen.— Is she clapping her hands?

Valentine.— Yes, as the old woman used to do.

Stephen.— Is it not the old woman with him?

Valentine.— No, she is dead (*still looking outside*). Now the dance ceases, she speaks to him, and the old man cries.

Stephen.— What is she telling him?

Valentine.— I can't hear, they are so far away. She motioned him to sit down under a tree; they both look happy now. She is comforting him.

Stephen (*sharply*).— Valentine, come here!

Valentine.— What's the matter?

Stephen.— You are annoying me.

Valentine.— But you asked me to tell you what she was doing.

Stephen.— Don't pay any attention to my temper. You always make me feel my inferior position.

Valentine.— A few minutes ago you said I was flattering you —

Stephen (*much excited*).— Yes, you are flattering me like a slave, so that I may be indulgent towards you. What am I to you? Nothing! You've more mercy for that old man, than for me! You are telling me she is comforting him, therefore he deserves more pity than I — he becomes more interesting —

Valentine.— But you don't want to be pitied, do you?

Stephen.— No, I don't want to be pitied, and to the last I want to say that I don't owe anything to anyone. You've all been wishing for my fall. That was your kindness! But I am not surrendering myself, nor yielding. I'd rather disappear (*tearing the manuscript*) and destroy — my work than to be pitied. No, I can yet despise and laugh at you! (*Pause, then supporting himself with his desk, convulsively, as if talking to his conscience.*) No! — It is not so! — It is not so! —

Valentine (*very calm, trying not to be seen by Stephen, picks up the torn manuscript, and puts everything in the drawer*).

Theresa's voice (*outside*).— You see that fairy going towards my home? She walks on the flower-beds, without spoiling them!

Stephen (*to Valentine*).— Who is coming?

Valentine (*goes to the door astonished*).— The Princess Heller!

Stephen (*astonished*).— Why, is she coming here? —

Valentine.— If you don't want to see her, I'll get rid of her.

Stephen (*after a second*).— No, I'll see her.

Valentine (*shrugging his shoulders*).— All right.

(*Exit right*)

Stephen (*going to meet her, but she appears before he reaches the threshold*).

SCENE IV

STEPHEN AND MERALDA

Meralda (*seriously*).— Will you give me a few minutes?

Stephen.— Yes.

Meralda (*advances*).

Stephen (*closes the door*).— I am really surprised to see you.

Meralda.— If I had sent for you, would you have come?

Stephen.— No.

Meralda.— Therefore you should not be surprised that I came. I wanted to ask a favor from you before going away.

Stephen.— Are you going away?

Meralda.— Yes, I leave Naples.

Stephen.— For always?

Meralda.— For always.

Stephen.— Where are you going?

Meralda.— I don't know.

(*A pause*)

Stephen.— You wanted a favor from me?

Meralda.— You have my letters; will you please return them to me? I will return yours. (*Giving her letters.*)

Stephen (*opens a drawer of his desk, takes out a bunch of letters, which he offers to Meralda, and puts back his*).

Meralda.— You don't ask me for any explanation?

Stephen.— There is nothing to say! We made a contract on 'Vanity.' You were the great lady who had led into your house all the powers and aristocracy. And I was the eminent man who was trying to conquer that same crowd! I was useful to your vanity, as you were to mine. We allied our egotism, and both of us knew we were lying to each other! But we have broken the conditions of our contract. I've lost my power, and you've let one of your former lovers reveal, for revenge, all your story of your adventurous life; therefore, you too, have come down from your 'gold pedestal.' You are going away in search of more adventures and more lies, while I (*without energy*) remain here, to contemplate the truth of my catastrophe! What explanation should I ask of you? Nothing binds us any longer!

Meralda (*sitting*).— It seems to me, now that we have unmasked each other, we are still bound to each other through our fall!

Stephen.— You mean? —

Meralda.— I don't deny that our contest was 'Vanity.' Yet behind my vanity, there was the woman; eager, anxious, corrupted, if you will, but

not perverse. She often tried, without success though, to make you understand her inner thoughts. You say I am going in search of other lies. You're mistaken, I am tired of them, I assure you. I returned your letters and took back mine expressly because these documents are false. Will I look for other adventures? Yes, but I shall look again for what even a corrupted woman is anxious to have — Love!

Stephen.— You could not ask that from me, who never understood love, not even when I had the illusion of life.

Meralda.— It was of that I wanted to speak to you. Now that you've lost your illusions, now that you're suffering because your ambition has been checked; well, take a new road. Begin to admit that precious element of joy which you have so far repudiated,

Stephen.— No, Meralda, everything is ended for me!

Meralda.— You're mistaken, and I will prove it to you.

Stephen.— How?

Meralda.— I wish you would turn your back upon the scepter of 'Glory' which has deceived and tortured you. I wish to take you away from this idle melancholy, which is consuming you. I wish to free you from this tomb, where perhaps you've planned your mental suicide.

Stephen (*repellently*).— I don't understand you. I don't want to understand you.

Meralda.— I want you to associate with my ideas, and look at life in a different way. To go out in the world care-free, without expecting either applause or homage. To break entirely with all social laws, and every day be satisfied with a new sensation. This is what I am proposing to you, Stephen.

Stephen.— I refuse.

Meralda.— So you are hoping to work again?

Stephen.— No!

Meralda.— And then (*slowly*)? — Will you be satisfied with pity?

Stephen (*quickly*).— So you came here for that? To inflict upon me your railings! You came here to remind me of those who once envied me, so that you may tell them you saw me humiliated! If you think you have accomplished your mission, you're mistaken. You'd better leave me in my tomb. Go!

Meralda (*rising quickly*).— When I am gone you will be sorry that you sent me away (*a little moved*).— You know that I loved you, and that I came here because I love you. In this moment you don't know exactly what you are saying, but tomorrow you will want me and you will send for me.

Stephen.— I shall not send for you, because your prospects horrify me.

Meralda.— It is the only thing which will help you!

Stephen.— You are advising me to run away like a coward, and associate myself with you, who are richer than I am.

Meralda.— Are you still fighting with your pride?

Stephen.— You are proposing to me to abandon the poor insane woman, who has been a devoted wife to me. You must admit, your advice is revolting!

Meralda.— I don't deserve your accusation, as my egotism was never like yours, that is blind to all sacrifices people were making for you. After all, my idea should not be so revolting, as you do not exist any more for that poor unfortunate. She does not want you, she does not speak to you, nor can she recognize you. You were ready to abandon her when she needed you, why not now, when your presence does not alleviate her sufferings? You want to remain here so as to quiet her conscience? But a Sister of Charity or a nurse would be of more help to her!

Stephen (*sitting*).— I must admit you are right. You make me realize the terrible truth. I must now find a means of earning my living. I shall fall lower and lower —

(*A pause*)

Meralda (*sure of herself, affectionately*).— Don't decide now, you are too agitated, think it over. I will postpone my departure.

Stephen.— Yes.

Meralda.— Au revoir, Stephen! —

Stephen (*does not answer*).

Meralda (*going towards the terrace*).

SCENE V

STEPHEN, MERALDA, THERESA

(*When Meralda is near the door Theresa enters, looking ecstatic. Stephen rises quickly, and trembles. Meralda also is a little frightened, and would like to go at once, but unwittingly Theresa prevents her.*)

Theresa (*sweetly*).— Where are you going? — How are you made? You perfume the air! — Give me a little of it! (*going to touch her*).

Stephen (*quickly*).— No, Theresa.

Theresa (*sadly*).— Why?

Meralda (*frightened, takes this opportunity to make her escape*).

Theresa.— Why?

Stephen (*in despair*).— Theresa! — Theresa! — Don't you understand what is happening! Can you not see me? Can you not see what I have become now, since you left me? (*taking her by the arm*). Can you not find a word, even a cursing one, so as to detain me here? —

Theresa (*laughing*).

Stephen (*letting her arm go*).— Nothing! Nothing! (*Worn out, falls on a chair*). Nothing!

Theresa (*goes on laughing*).

ACT IV

Stephen Baldi's studio. The room now has a squalid appearance. It is night. Only the electric lamp is lighted on the desk. All the bric-a-brac has been removed, and also there are no more books nor manuscripts on the desk. On the floor there are some boxes, a trunk and a dress suit case.

SCENE I

STEPHEN, VALENTINE, A SERVANT AND TWO PORTERS

Stephen (*seated at his desk, writing letters; he looks very pale. Valentine is packing*).

Stephen (*without raising his head*).— Close the trunk and the dress suit case, and give me the keys.

Valentine.— Have you anything else to put in?

Stephen.— No.

Valentine (*closes the trunk and the dress suit case, and puts the key on the desk*).

Stephen (*putting the keys in his pocket*).— Send them away.

Valentine (*going to the door and calling*):— You may come in.

(*Enter a servant and a porter*)

Valentine.— Take the trunk and the dress suit case to the station immediately.

Stephen (*to the servant*).— Tonio, tell the Princess that I'll meet her at the station at eleven, but the train goes at eleven fifteen.

(*The porter goes out with the trunk and the servant with the dress suit case*)

Valentine.— So you are both going away tonight?

Stephen.— Yes.

Valentine (*going to close the door*).

Stephen.— Leave the door open, it is so warm here.

(*A pause*)

Valentine (*going on packing*).— What shall I do with all these books and manuscripts?

Stephen.— Take them home with you.

Valentine.— But shall I have a home?

Stephen.— Sell them or burn them.

Valentine.— When Mr. Marcolini comes here tomorrow I'll try to make him buy them. It is true that he told me he never read a book in his life; but there is his wife — She says she is very fond of animals; maybe she is also fond of literature.

(*A silence*)

Stephen.— Will you please send these four letters?

Valentine (*counting the letters*).— But there are five.

Stephen.— No, that large envelope contains a little money for you to use while you are looking for a position.

Valentine.— Thanks.

Stephen.— Everything has been arranged. You were right when you said that after paying all pressing debts, there would remain little. I left everything in the hands of my lawyer, who will pay the hospital expenses. I did not leave her in the care of the aunt, because I don't trust her. The superintendent of the hospital has promised me to take good care of Theresa and tomorrow morning a nurse will call for her. Will you please accompany them too. I told the superintendent you were a relation of ours, therefore they will allow you to visit Theresa.

Valentine.— I see you have thought of everything.

Stephen.— Yes, of you also.

Valentine.— I have already thanked you.

Stephen.— For the money.

Valentine.— Have I something else to thank you for.

Stephen.— Yes, I have arranged for you to see her sometimes.

Valentine.— Yes, I thank you especially for Theresa's sake. I understand she will be well cared for, but it will always be among strangers. Since we cannot rely on her aunt, I am glad I shall be useful to her. We said she does not distinguish one person from another? I am not quite sure about that. For instance, she seems so far away from you — just as if she were dead. I should wager anything, that afflicted soul is hiding its sorrow. It must be so, or how could you explain the phenomenon of her constantly repeating the verse the old sailor used to recite at the time when she was happy? And why should she insist upon wearing that dress, which she ordered that same night when she became insane? I understand we cannot put much faith in these facts. Insanity is the most mysterious, impenetrable illness.

Stephen (*rising*).— Yet you speak as if you had penetrated it without finding obstacles.

Valentine.— I! —

Stephen.— You don't quite admit it, yet you feel you will be a comfort to her. Because you're convinced that in her own soul she still remembers

your devotion. So, besides having the opportunity of seeing her, yon will have the privilege of being a comfort to her and the hope — no, I mean the certainty, of being her favorite. And this will make you proud, happy! —

Valentine (*excusing himself*).— But Stephen!

Stephen.— Let me say it! I envy you!

Valentine.— Please don't mortify me, remember I was your servant.

Stephen.— Yes, I envy you for what you will be tomorrow and for what you are now. You never had any ambition. You were deformed, yet you were satisfied; you were weak, yet you did not complain! You were my servant, yet you were contented. When you could speak to the woman who adored me, you were happy. And when later she became insane, you had the privilege of watching her through your window, while she was wandering in the garden, in that same spot, when formerly she had covered me with kisses. Indeed, you must feel as if you had realized your dreams and you have now your reward.

Valentine (*casting down his eyes*).

Stephen.— Ah! you cast down your eyes! You never thought that I would guess everything, and that I should honor you by spying upon your inner thoughts?

Valentine.— You had not the right to do that.

Stephen.— Why?

Valentine.— No, you had not the right to do that, because I am only a miserable creature, and you should not have been so cruel.

Stephen.— Ah! you are my rival!

Valentine (*quickly*).— You are a coward!

Stephen.— You dare to judge me, you who stand there waiting, watching for my departure in order to seize what belonged to me alone.

Valentine.— Don't torment me.

Stephen.— I curse you for all you have made me suffer and for all you have made me say. (*Covering his face with both hands, then controlling himself, goes to his desk.*)

Valentine (*does not move*).

SCENE II

STEPHEN, VALENTINE, THERESA

(*Enter Theresa from right; she is dressed differently, but her hair is still hanging down and has some ornaments in it. She drags after her, with one hand, her favorite dress of the third act, and has on her shoulders laces and ribbons.*)

Stephen (*seeing her would like to hide himself*).

Theresa (*to Valentine*).— Did you see my new dress? Look, is it not beautiful?

Valentine (*trying not to look at her*).— Yes, yes I saw it, Madame Theresa.

Theresa. — And I am going to put on it all these ribbons and lace. But why don't you look at me.

'Open your eyes, on the earth!'

Stephen.— No more, no more! (*Going to take his hat, which is on a chair.*)

Valentine (*going to him*). — Let me convince you. Don't be so obstinate.

Stephen (*stops*).

Valentine.— Because you are in despair, you're going to run after a woman whom you loathe. And when you realize your mistake it will be too late.

Stephen.— No.

Valentine.— All her money will disgust you.

Stephen.— No.

Valentine.— Remain here and let me go.

Stephen.— You!

Theresa (*has seated herself, in the meantime, on one of the boxes and is arranging her dress*).

Valentine.— Yes, yes I, the intruder! After the mortification you gave me I could not fulfil, what before, I called my duty and I could not even enjoy your money. You seem to be astonished. You are right, as I have never been proud! But, how funny! It came all at once! (*Taking out from his pocket the envelope, puts it on the desk.*)

Stephen (*gently*).— I beg of you to take back that money, which I owed you for your services. You see your pride should not be hurt, and then forgive the bitter words which I have just uttered! — I am going now.

Valentine (*sincerely*).— Can you not understand that you can save yourself only by remaining here?

Stephen.— You yourself said, 'She seems so far away from you — just as if she were dead.'

Valentine.— Good souls, Stephen, sometimes leave this world, so as to influence us from a distance, to a better life, and we don't rebel as we did during their life.

Stephen.— No, it is not true! If I remain here I shall die of a broken heart (*embracing him*). Good by, Valentine.

Valentine.— Good by.

Stephen (*impulsively approaches Theresa*).

Theresa (*rising quickly*).— What do you want?

Stephen (*impulsively embraces her*).— I wish you would see that I am crying.

(*Exit quickly*)

SCENE III

THERESA, VALENTINE

Theresa (*choosing a ribbon. The dress is lying on a box*).

Valentine (*after a second sits down*).

Theresa (*taking a ribbon, throws it into the air. Not succeeding in catching it, she utters a cry*).— Oh! (*to Valentine*). You (*pointing to the ribbon*); help me!

Valentine (*rises, picks up the ribbon and returns it to Theresa, avoids looking at her*).

Theresa (*taking back the ribbon*).— Are you afraid of me?

Valentine.— No, Madame Theresa.

Theresa.— Do you hate me?

Valentine.— I am sorry you think that.

Theresa.— —— I don't know who you are.

Valentine.— I am only a hunchback!

Theresa.— What else?

Valentine.— A parasite.

Theresa.— Why?

Valentine.— Because I make profit from other people's misfortune. I cannot deny that! He was right when he accused me. Yes, I even blushed. It seemed to me then that I should no longer have the courage to approach you — To speak to you — But now that I am sure no one is looking at me, that you cannot see me or hear me, I take advantage of my opportunity. Yes, I am near you. I am looking at you; I can speak to you, and this is my happiest moment. If you were not the victim of such a terrible misfortune I could not be here.

Theresa.— I am convinced we understand each other. Let us talk (*making him sit down*) —Sit here, and let us talk as if we were friends.

Valentine.— Yes, like two friends.

SCENE IV

VALENTINE, THERESA, STEPHEN

Stephen's voice (*outside*).— Valentine! Valentine! —

Valentine (*rising quickly, as if afraid of being found with Theresa*).— Yes? —

Stephen's voice.— I am here, Valentine!

Valentine (*going to the door*).

Theresa (*rising quickly, picking up her dress*).— No, no! Don't let him come in; no don't! I am dressed like a servant — I must be dressed up to receive this gentleman.

Valentine (*remains on the threshold*).

Stephen (*enters and throws himself in Valentine's arms*).

Theresa (*hiding herself in a corner of the room*).— Send him away! Send him away!

(*A brief silence*)

Stephen.— I did not have the courage to do it.

Valentine (*taking his hat from him*).

Stephen.— To get away from here, I fought like a wild beast that tries to break the bars of his cage, and this terrible fight has exhausted me. I have no more strength. (*Exhausted falls onto sofa.*)

Valentine.— You've spent so many sleepless nights. Calm yourself, and tomorrow you will be strong again. No! — stronger than you have ever been.

Stephen.— If I could only hope so! — (*Sees Theresa hidden in a corner.*)

Valentine.— Call her.

Stephen.— She will not come to me.

Valentine (*going to her*).— Do you wish to speak with that gentleman?

Theresa (*pointing to her dress*).— What will he think of me!

Valentine.— Make some excuse.

Theresa.— How?

Valentine (*taking her by the hand, and bringing her to Stehpen*).— Tell him you have another dress. Show it to him. You want to see the dress, don't you, Stephen?

Stephen.— Yes.

Theresa (*showing her dress*).— Do you like it?

Stephen (*sweetly*).— It is beautiful.

Valentine.— Sit next to him.

Theresa (*sitting near Stephen*).

Valentine.— Tell him that it is going to be more beautiful.

Stephen.— Yes, tell me everything.

Theresa.— I'll show it to you. (*Taking one ribbon and putting it on the lace.*)

Valentine.— I am going to my room now, Stephen.

Stephen (*to Theresa*).— There is a bad light here, you will spoil your eyes.

Theresa (*smiling*).— No.

Valentine (*exit to the left*).

Stephen.— Let us now rest together, and tomorrow we will both go back to our work — I shall be patient — like you, and you will advise me — give me the example. You shall be my 'Virtue.'

Theresa.— I am too little — little —

Stephen (*repeating*).— Little — little (*timidly embraces her*).

Theresa (*not objecting to his embrace, and ceasing to work*).

Stephen (*embracing her and putting his head on her shoulder*).— So.

Theresa.— Why are you tired? — Did you walk much?

Stephen.— Yes.

Theresa.— Do you want to go to sleep?

Stephen.— Yes.

(*A brief silence*)

Stephen (*closing his eyes, murmurs*).— Little by little everything disappears. I only see you, as if you were my soul — I see you so quiet, so quiet — Ah! at last I can sleep!

(*A silence*)

(*Stephen sleeps*)

Theresa (*gently disengaging herself from his arms, then rises, letting her dress fall on him. Smiling, draws away back. All at once begins to repeat, in the same monotonous way the old man's verse*).—

Over the sea — don't look,
Close your eyes — and go on.

(*Exit to the terrace, her voice is heard from outside*).—

There is a friend,— near by you
Close your eyes — and go on.

Valentine's voice (*outside, in despair*).— Run, Stephen! Madame Theresa is standing on the parapet stretching her hands to the sea!

Valentine (*enters from left, runs to the terrace and exit*).

Valentine (*outside, utters a cry of terrible anguish*).

CURTAIN

THE SILVER FLUTE

(A Chronicle of Ancient Greece)

By Arthur Upson

HEAR the strange story of the silver flute:
Beside Ægean waters on an isle
Of what fair name my chronicle is mute
Save that 'twas of the storied Cyclades —
Once in a long-past hour on Chronos' dial
There dwelt a youth in bondage of that lord
Whose grandsire had the isle for his reward
In some old war when Persians swept the seas.

This youth was not an islander, but dwelt,
Before his lord had bound him, under skies
Where the white fanes of fair-limbed gods did melt
Within the still-fleeced blue of Grecian air.
There had his lips, and there his ardent eyes,
Their lesson of all beauty spoke or writ,
And his empassioned heart had stored the wit
Of artists, bards, and sages gathered there.

Sold out of Athens for a paltry debt!
Seeking a father's blemished name to clear,
He willingly his hand to letters set,
Pledging a certain weary term of suns
His scholar-service; then with feignèd cheer
Clomb a tall galley of his master's fleet,
Turned southward, nor looked back to hillsides sweet
And the loved sands where green Ægina runs.

Then all the afternoon that galley sailed
To south and east by Attic promontories,
And many a gleaming, homeward prow was hailed,
Bound for Piraeus and familiar rest.
Well knew that exile youth all songs and stories
Yon fishers loved when night had fetched them home,

And often had he longed like them to roam —
  Yet now his heart lay heavy in his breast.

Among the isles dim, purple evening came:
With sails reefed, cables coiled, and slackened oars,
The ship still glided 'neath its harbor flame.
  Strange port that was, whose black unwelcoming wharves,
Heaped high with spicy spoils from Asian shores,
No hillside temple whitely overgleamed —
For Trade was there the only god esteemed
  With votives of huge bales and hideous corves.

Then in the youth an agony of dread,
Of utter, homesick longing searched his soul.
He cursed his honor — wished he had lain dead
  Or e'er he bound his scholarship to be
Counter of gains to such a lord. He stole
Far sternward on the steady-moving ship,
Set a small flute unto his trembling lip,
  And made a little Attic melody.

'Twas a boy's song he oft enough had sung
In golden summers with Athenian lads
When, under leafy temple groves they flung
  Wave-weary limbs along that green of Pan
Wherewith her rock lone Psyttaleia clads;
Full many a faun-like circle had he trod
Round the rough statues of the woodland god
Ere swift care came and touched him into man.

As now that wavering air fell soothingwise
Deep in his painful dream of merry hours —
Air mystically fitting to these skies,
  Though framed for fairer — his hot tide of blood
Ebbed back to calmness: so from Pan's thick bowers
Young bathers watch quick storms across the bay
Subsiding as they chant their joyous lay
  Ere they plunge homeward through the quiet flood.

He felt the keel's grate and the prow's impact;
But still he stood alone afolt the stern
With flute to lip, and yearning eyes that tracked
  The westward crimson of that fallen day:
Then, pausing 'mid the stir, he chanced to turn
And met the passionate gaze of one in whom
Music had called Hope, shining from her tomb,
  And raised warm Memory in her trodden clay.

What dryad, faun, or god in beechen dell —
Same say 'twas Pan himself — did first discover
How 'neath a wooden wand's dissolving spell
  Hope trembles into life, Despair turns Hope?
Or was it only some too-happy lover?
Or sad slave toiling on in Fate's despite?
For Grief and Joy, when both have reached their height,
  Meet in the calm of Music's crowning slope.

'Twas but one upward glance from reeking benches
Deep in the laboring hulk where main Despair
Pulled that proud galley through the ocean trenches;
  An instant — it was gone: and nevermore
Beheld the youth again those eyes of care.
He stowed his flute, and through the lanterned dark,
With other cargoes bidden disembark,
  He sought the untried shadows of the shore.

And now through month on month his fine brain tasks
O'er ledgers, bonds, and countless bills-of-lading —
From dawn to dusk, o'er corves and oily casks
  That steam the warehouse dock with odors brute;
But often, when he sees fair courage fading,
In cool of night, or by the earliest dawn,
Ere the first step, or after all have gone,
  He seeks the fiery spirit of his flute.

So, for dull years the price of youth he flung
To the dark keeping of regardless Time.
Sole thrift of all that wasteful barter, clung
  Those golden moments of the night and morn

When crystal-limpid melodies would climb
Round the great heart of Silence from his lips;
Or when, of dusks, he boarded galley ships
  Fresh from Piraeus with their wine and corn.

Just gods decree that naught of beauty fades,
Nor ever is lost in this deaf-seeming world;
And, if sweet sound no earthly ear persuades,
  Unto its breath they do themselves bend low,
And in their heavenly memories keep it furled
For poets' dreams; or else they make sad hearts
Draw near, as if by chance, till Music starts,
  As in that oarsman, Hope's diviner glow.

Oft on that oarsman mused the exile youth,
Still vivid in his thought the first surprise
Of that revealing face. Yet now the truth,
  As long years labored by, became more plain
And a new meaning looked from all men's eyes
With hints of old, deep-sunken loveliness,
And, under toil's coarse mask, the slow distress
  Of godlike dreams crushed down and dumb in pain.

And oft, beneath tall pharos-fires he boarded
Some trader in the harbor, and would wend
Fluting among dank shrouds and cargoes sordid,
  And deep into foul caverns of the hold,
Thinking alway perchance to touch that friend;
But never thus — though many another face
Through sooty glooms yearned up to such rare grace,
  And many an ear drank in that music's gold.

It happened so one night he, wandering thus,
Through tender stops his Attic spirit sighed
While the great summer's moon hung luminous
  Like a clear cresset o'er the yarded sail.
Oarsmen and sailors, weary of the tide,
Lay moveless, listening; 'twixt the toiling morrows
Music and rest shut down upon their sorrows,
  And through their limbs did kindly sleep prevail.

Then, like a very genius of dark earth,
Sudden, the island's lord before them rose —
Or like on vineyard hills the August dearth,
  Or olive-blight when boughs droop heaviest.
Oh, cruel had he ever been, God knows
Cruel to man and beast, and even cruel
To earth whose vintage, metal, oil, and fuel,
  He wrung from her with miserly unrest!

"What fellow idles here with piping tune?"
His loud cry shattered down the moonlit hush.
"Hence to thy shed, knave! What, thou'lt have me soon
  Master of mock-men and slug-mountebanks!"
No more.— Some shrank as though beneath the crush
Of powers ancestral who proud Persian arms
Had beat to dust; some hid their base alarms;
While others, cursing, writhed upon their planks.

Over them all in dignity serene,
With flute to lip, the youth paused musefully.
Arion was not tranquiller of mien
  What time the enchanted dolphin heard his lyre
And from those vile Sicilians on the sea
Swept him afar; nor yet more certain-souled
Amphion was, who built up Thebes of old
  By music magical, and Orphean fire!

Silene, poising on her silver path,
Remembered Phoebus' fine Thessalian lute
That soothed his exile when their father's wrath
  Doomed him to service of the Shepherd King;
And oh, Endymion with a herdboy's flute
Through the pale valley piping to his sheep,
Or in his listless Latmian cave asleep,
  Were not more fair than he of whom I sing!

Whether or no the dulcet goddess turned
Into the youth's warm heart some yearning thought,
His being with resistless music burned;
  Into his memory crept a country air,

Of an old minor love-song chiefly wrought,
But mingled with the laughter and the sighs
Of half-forgotten Attic lullabies:
Sweet was its cadence out of all compare.

And this he played, until the maddened ear
Of one's own past would stop itself for woe;
Then, gliding into martial measures, near
  Burst the reëchoing heart with bounding wars —
The blaze of splendid battles long ago;
Magnificence of Marathon; wild bliss
Of Mycnle, Plataea, Salamis,
  And shattered prows on Hellespontine shores!

They say stones leaped along the Ilian walls
At the Phoebean melodies; then how
Might human blood, e'en though it sluggish crawls
  Through craven limbs, resist so sweet appeal? —
Laconia bred that lord; yet his stern brow
Had known a mother's lips, his Spartan breast,
For once, had panted love, ere riches pressed,
  And Fortune set him highest upon her wheel.

Still he stood with amazement, all the bound
Of his pride-withered and self-rooted dreams
Hot-surging under tides of sudden sound:
  Child, lover, awoke; his grandsire in him stirred —
(At Artemisium he with two triremes
Had baffled Persia!) — Then the silence fell,
Resounding silence, Night's blue-caverned shell
  Treasuring immortal harmonies unheard!

All this the youth perceived: not vain those years
Of music's ministry to secret pain —
Not all for naught those desperate mortal fears
  Searched out in others' lives at dawn and duck;
Nor were the exile and the toil in vain.
Beauty-remembered is a fragrant flower,
But, cherished through the else-unlovely hour,
  Elysium hath no bloom to match its musk!

. . . . . .

The common morning of a common morrow
Succeeded to the wonder of the night.
With dawn that galley's oars began to furrow
  Old fareways of eternal amaranth;
The youth beheld the slanting lanteen's flight
From his black island-wharf; into his mind
Strange ports arose, his feet might never find,
  Piled high with Tyrian wools and tragacanth.

Out with the ship the island's master sailed,
Boarding her sudden at the front of dawn,
Wherefore none knew . . . And now mild Autumn paled
  The rose-red passion of Summer all among
Those island-beds of purple ocean-lawn,
And brought the day ten years had toiled to bring
Whereon the youth's release should shout and sing
  Within him — yet he shouted not nor sung.

With the same sun when that long term was full
The island lord returned within his boat,
Bearing nor tragacanth, nor Tyrian wool,
  Nor myrrh, in barter for his fruit and oil.
He came in Antioch linen, all his coat
Being one woven piece, and in his hand
He bore, soft-wound in many an azure band,
  Some hidden Asian thing of princely spoil.

Down from the ship he stepped along the wharf
All in his rich array and stately style:
Then calling over cask, and bale, and corf,
  He summoned the Athenian to his side.
The curious village folk from round the isle,
Idlers, and merchants, stood there wonder-smitten,
And so the youth as well, at what lay written
  Plain in that countenance of cruel pride:

For cruel pride was gone, and in its stead
A meekness dwelt, as strange to him as all
The sumptuous vesture that so richly fed
  The astonishment of people, and more fit,

For mildness gave him looks imperial,
And loftier power that suited with a lord,
Of glorious descent. With one accord
They hailed him in awed murmurs, seeing it.

The Athenian obeyed with courtesy.
And thus it fell: That costly orient vest,
One piece of woven linen flowing free,
From his own shoulders did the lord remove,
And in its folds his bondman rarely dressed.
Then, from its swathings, slow the marvel came —
A wondrous flute, wrought out by toil and flame
From purest silver ever smith did prove.

For these that ship's whole treasure was exchanged;
For these men searched through many an Asian town,
And that tall galley many a seaboard ranged.—
"Today thou'rt free again," the master spake.
"Tomorrow shall this galley bear thee down
Between the aisles, along Ægina foam,
A victor, with his spoil, returning home.
Tonight for me thou shalt fair sounds awake."

And so it fell. That night with princely feast
The master entertained his ten-years' slave.
The young Athenian fluted on, nor ceased
To move melodious spirits with a sigh,
But to the silver flute his sweet lip gave,
Till white waves broke around them in the dawn;
And through east windows, loitering and wan
Silene listened from a saffron sky.

So, the tale goes, among the Cyclades
One shining temple more strove heavenward;
And Beauty again, from foam of sullen seas
Like Aphrodite, rose to regal power.
Thus Music moved the heart of that great lord.
And the white temple on his island's brow
Cheered many a mariner over many a prow
For full a thousand years from that far hour.

In the gold noontide of that final day
Anchors were heaved, smooth dipped a hundred oars,
And southern winds compelled his sail away,
That son of Art.— My chronicle is mute
About his after-deeds on other shores:
It only says men's hearts could long discern
Bright vision of him at the galley's stern,
And the clear music of his silver flute.

THE LITANIES OF LOVE

By Curtis Hidden Page

I

Love Suppliant

MY Lady, hearken! At thine altar-stairs
I sing a daily litany to thee
Of loving reverence that aspires and dares.

Before thy shrine I sink on bended knee,
Yet sing with lifted forehead, unafraid,
At once a song of triumph, and a plea.

New-knighted by love's holy accolade
I fear not foes nor fates; and yet I fear,
And kneel before thine altar, asking aid.

O dear my Lady, this is my one fear —
Lest I give not the love thou meritest . . .
Teach me all perfect love, my Lady dear.

O blessed Lady, Beautiful and Best
Teach me the many perfect things thou art
That make up perfect love, my Lady blest.

To thee I come, to thee I trust my heart —
Take me and teach me ever more and more . . .
For just by coming I have learned a part.

Lady of love that groweth ever more,
That "scattereth yet increaseth," giveth all
And yet by giving addeth to its store —

Teach me thy answer to the highest call,
Teach me love's greatest joy, O Lady of love,
The joy of loving, that can never pall.

My love streams up toward thine enshrined above,
My love strives up through thoughts and dreams and prayers,
Praying to grow like thine, O Lady of Love.

II

Lady of Art

Lady of Love, and beauty that love brings,
Lady of art's revealings, Lady of Truth,
Teach me how truth in beauty speaks and sings.

See, on thy altar I have laid my youth
To burn with love and art and beauty's fires
Until it be *refined* in very sooth —

Until each thought of art and self expires,
And from the ashes Phoenix-like up-springs
The perfect art, that greatens and inspires.

III

Lady of Sorrows

Lady of sorrows, still you bring me joy
Out of your pain, and smile with eyes that ache,
Hiding your life-wounds, like the least annoy,

With beautiful brave laughter, for my sake.
Yet deep beneath, I feel the ceaseless swell
And fall of waves of tears — nay, let them break . . .

Yes . . . let them break . . . The ebb-tide will compel
Their tumult into calm, and bring the peace
Of moon-lit waters, murmuring: all is well.

IV

Love Celebrant

If I, even I, have won thy love divine,
  O Lady of love, O Lady of joy and peace,
If I have won thy love and made thee mine,

Then life is born anew of love's increase,
  Transfigured by love's purifying blaze,
Doubts fall away, darkness and sorrow cease,

And all is bright with sun-light and love's rays.—
  If I have won thy love, then love must sing,
If I have won thy love, then life must praise —

Listen! triumphant love shall wake and fling
  Great floods of swelling wild exultant song —
Then sink to tender love's low murmuring . . . .

Oh, love is gentlest when it most is strong
  And kneels when most exulting . . . let me grow
Quite dumb before thine altar, where I long

To stand, thy celebrant, within the glow . . .
  Or but to light the candles at the shrine . . .
Or just be one, and burn there . . . Even so.

THE MOTHER-CRY

By Edith M. Thomas

In memory of Isabel

THE maiden-child, whom love did guard,—
Like firstling rose upon the tree,
Is forth — beyond all watch and ward,
That in great love can ever be!

Mute Nature's deeps have round her surged,
Have borne her form none knoweth where;
Some part, so loved, with earth is merged,
Some part hath veiled itself in air.

Up goes a Cry,— a far, wild Cry!
(Were any Heaven built in starry space,
Now, down the bright and riven sky,
The lost, the maiden-child, must pace!)

"Oh, is there none who understands —
Who understands the things I miss? —
Her eyes, her lips, her little hands,—
Her hands that I must have, to kiss!"

Unto that Mother-Cry, in vain,
All answer . . . "Yet, if it be so
Thou shalt not have her hands again,
Still, thou the Touch shalt surely know!

"Thou mayst not meet her eyes of blue,
That were thy morn and even-light;
Yet — by no perishable view —
Thy Sight shall surely meet her sight!

"But where? but when?" — "Not in this Dream!
But when The Real of Sight, of Sound,
Of precious Touch, stand forth, supreme,
Above the Fleeting Substance, crowned!"

SALOME

A Tragedy in One Act
Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde

CHARACTERS:

HEROD ANTIPAS, *Tetrarch of Judaea.*
IOKANAAN, *The Prophet.*
THE YOUNG SYRIAN, *Captain of the Guard.*
TIGELLINUS, *a young Roman.*
A Cappadocian.
A Nubian.
First Soldier
Second Soldier.
The Page of HERODIAS.
Jews, Nazarenes, Etc.
A Slave.
NAAMAN, *The Executioner.*
HERODIAS, *wife of the Tetrarch.*
SALOME, *daughter of* HERODIAS.
The Slaves of SALOME.

SCENE

A GREAT TERRACE in the Palace of Herod, set above the banqueting-hall. Some soldiers are leaning over the balcony. To the right there is a gigantic staircase, to the left, at the back, an old cistern surrounded by a wall of green bronze. The moon is shining very brightly.

The Young Syrian. How beautiful is the Princess Salome tonight!

The Page of Herodias. Look at the moon. How strange the moon seems! She is like a woman rising from a tomb. She is like a dead woman. One might fancy she was looking for dead things.

The Young Syrian. She has a strange look. She is like a little princess who wears a yellow veil, and whose feet are of silver. She is like a princess who has little white doves for feet. One might fancy she was dancing.

The Page of Herodias. She is like a woman who is dead. She moves very slowly.

(*Noise in the banqueting-hall.*)

First Soldier. What an uproar! Who are those wild beasts howling?

Second Soldier. The Jews. They are always like that. They are disputing about their religion.

First Soldier. Why do they dispute about their religion?

Second Soldier. I cannot tell. They are always doing it. The Pharisees, for instance, say that there are angels, and the Sadducees declare that angels do not exist.

First Soldier. I think it is ridiculous to dispute about such things.

The Young Syrian. How beautiful is the Princess Salome to-night!

The Page of Herodias. You are always looking at her. You look at her too much. It is dangerous to look at people in such fashion. Something terrible may happen.

The Young Syrian. She is very beautiful to-night.

First Soldier. The Tetrarch has a sombre aspect.

Second Soldier. Yes; he has a sombre aspect.

First Soldier. He is looking at something.

Second Soldier. He is looking at some one.

First Soldier. At whom is he looking?

Second Soldier. I cannot tell.

The Young Syrian. How pale the Princess is! Never have I seen her so pale. She is like the shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver.

The Page of Herodias. You must not look at her. You look too much at her.

First Soldier. Herodias has filled the cup of the Tetrarch.

The Cappadocian. Is that the Queen Herodias, she who wears a black mitre sewed with pearls, and whose hair is powdered with blue dust?

First Soldier. Yes; that is Herodias, the Tetrarch's wife.

Second Soldier. The Tetrarch is very fond of wine. He has wine of three sorts. One which is brought from the Island of Samothrace, and is purple like the cloak of Cæsar.

The Cappadocian. I have never seen Cæsar.

Second Soldier. Another that comes from a town called Cyprus, and is as yellow as gold.

The Cappadocian. I love gold.

Second Soldier. And the third is a wine of Sicily. That wine is as red as blood.

The Nubian. The gods of my country are very fond of blood. Twice in the year we sacrifice to them young men and maidens: fifty young men and a hundred maidens. But I am afraid that we never give them quite enough, for they are very harsh to us.

The Cappadocian. In my country there are no gods left. The Romans have driven them out. There are some who say that they have hidden themselves in the mountains, but I do not believe it. Three nights I have been on the mountains seeking them everywhere. I did not find them, and at last I called them by their names, and they did not come. I think they are dead.

First Soldier. The Jews worship a God that one cannot see.

The Cappadocian. I cannot understand that.

First Soldier. In fact, they only believe in things that one cannot see.

The Cappadocian. That seems to me altogether ridiculous.

The Voice of Iokanaan. After me shall come another mightier than I. I am not worthy so much as to unloose the latchet of his shoes. When he cometh the solitary places shall be glad. They shall blossom like the rose. The eyes of the blind shall see the day, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened. The suckling child shall put his hand upon the dragon's lair, he shall lead the lions by their manes.

Second Soldier. Make him be silent. He is always saying ridiculous things.

First Soldier. No, no. He is a holy man. He is very gentle, too. Every day when I give him to eat he thanks me.

The Cappadocian. Who is he?

First Soldier. A prophet.

The Cappadocian. What is his name?

First Soldier. Iokanaan.

The Cappadocian. Whence comes he?

First Soldier. From the desert, where he fed on locusts and wild honey. He was clothed in camel's hair, and round his loins he had a leathern belt. He was very terrible to look upon. . A great multitude used to follow him. He even had disciples.

The Cappadocian. What is he talking of?

First Soldier. We can never tell. Sometimes he says things that affright one, but it is impossible to understand what he says.

The Cappadocian. May one see him?

First Soldier. No. The Tetrarch has forbidden it.

The Young Syrian. The Princess has hidden her face behind her fan! Her little white hands are fluttering like doves that fly to their dovecots. They are like white butterflies. They are just like white butterflies.

The Page of Herodias. What is that to you? Why do you look at her? You must not look at her. . . Something terrible may happen.

The Cappadocian. (*Pointing to the cistern.*) What a strange prison!

Second Soldier. It is an old cistern.

The Cappadocian. An old cistern! That must be a poisonous place in which to dwell!

Second Soldier. Oh no! For instance, the Tetrarch's brother, his elder brother, the first husband of Herodias the Queen, was imprisoned there for twelve years. It did not kill him. At the end of the twelve years he had to be strangled.

The Cappadocian. Strangled? Who dared to do that?

Second Soldier. (*Pointing to the Executioner, a huge negro.*) That man yonder, Naaman.

The Cappadocian. He was not afraid?

Second Soldier. Oh no! The Tetrarch sent him the ring.

The Cappadocian. What ring?

Second Soldier. The death ring. So he was not afraid.

The Cappadocian. Yet it is a terrible thing to strangle a king.

First Soldier. Why? Kings have but one neck, like other folk.

The Cappadocian. I think it terrible.

The Young Syrian. The Princess is getting up! She is leaving the table! She looks very troubled. Ah, she is coming this way. Yes, she is coming towards us. How pale she is! Never have I seen her so pale.

The Page of Herodias. I pray you not to look at her.

The Young Syrian. She is like a dove that has strayed. . . . She is like a narcissus trembling in the wind. . . . She is like a silver flower.

(*Enter Salome.*)

Salome. I will not stay. I cannot stay. Why does the Tetrarch look at me all the while with his mole's eyes under his shaking eyelids? It is strange that the husband of my mother looks at me like that. I know not what it means. Of a truth I know it too well.

The Young Syrian. You have left the feast, Princess?

Salome. How sweet is the air here! I can breathe here! Within there are Jews from Jerusalem who are tearing each other in pieces over their foolish ceremonies, and barbarians who drink and drink and spill their wine on the pavement, and Greeks from Smyrna with painted eyes and painted cheeks, and frizzed hair curled in columns, and Egyptians silent and subtle, with long nails of jade and russet cloaks, and Romans brutal and coarse, with their uncouth jargon. Ah! how I loathe the Romans! They are rough and common, and they give themselves the airs of noble lords.

The Young Syrian. Will you be seated, Princess?

The Page of Herodias. Why do you speak to her? Oh! something terrible will happen. Why do you look at her?

Salome. How good to see the moon! She is like a little piece of money, a little silver flower. She is cold and chaste. I am sure she is a virgin. She has the beauty of a virgin. Yes, she is a virgin. She has never defiled herself. She has never abandoned herself to men, like the other goddesses.

The Voice of Iokanaan. Behold! the Lord hath come. The Son of Man is at hand. The centaurs have hidden themselves in the rivers, and the nymphs have left the rivers, and are lying beneath the leaves in the forests.

Salome. Who was that who cried out?

Second Soldier. The prophet, Princess.

Salome. Ah, the prophet! He of whom the Tetrarch is afraid?

Second Soldier. We know nothing of that, Princess. It was the prophet Iokanaan who cried out.

The Young Syrian. Is it your pleasure that I bid them bring your litter, Princess? The night is fair in the garden.

Salome. He says terrible things about my mother, does he not?

Second Soldier. We never understand what he says, Princess.

Salome. Yes; he says terrible things about her.

(*Enter a Slave.*)

The Slave. Princess, the Tetrarch prays you to return to the feast.

Salome. I will not return.

The Young Syrian. Pardon me, Princess, but if you return not some misfortune may happen.

Salome. Is he an old man, this prophet?

The Young Syrian. Princess, it were better to return. Suffer me to lead you in.

Salome. This prophet . . . is he an old man?

First Soldier. No, Princess, he is quite young.

Second Soldier. One cannot be sure. There are those who say that he is Elias.

Salome. Who is Elias?

Second Soldier. A prophet of this country in bygone days, Princess.

The Slave. What answer may I give the Tetrarch from the Princess?

The Voice of Iokanaan. Rejoice not, O land of Palestine, because the rod of him who smote thee is broken. For from the seed of the serpent shall come a basilisk, and that which is born of it shall devour the birds.

Salome. What a strange voice! I would speak with him.

First Soldier. I fear it may not be, Princess. The Tetrarch does not suffer anyone to speak with him. He has even forbidden the high priest to speak with him.

Salome. I desire to speak with him.

First Soldier. It is impossible, Princess.

Salome. I will speak with him.

The Young Syrian . Would it not be better to return to the banquet?

Salome. Bring forth this prophet.

(*Exit the Slave.*)

First Soldier. We dare not, Princess.

Salome. (*Approaching the cistern and looking down into it.*) How black it is, down there! It must be terrible to be in so black a hole! It is like a tomb. . . . (*To the soldiers.*) Did you not hear me? Bring out the prophet. I would look on him.

Second Soldier. Princess, I beg you, do not require this of us.

Salome. You are making me wait upon your pleasure.

First Soldier. Princess, our lives belong to you, but we cannot do what you have asked of us. And indeed it is not of us that you should ask this thing.

Salome (*looking at the young Syrian*). Ah!

The Page of Herodias. Oh! what is going to happen? I am sure that something terrible will happen.

Salome. (*Going up to the young Syrian.*) Thou wilt do this thing for me, wilt thou not, Narraboth? Thou wilt do this thing for me. I have ever been kind towards thee. Thou wilt do it for me. I would but look at him, this strange prophet. Men have talked so much of him. Often have I heard the Tetrarch talk of him. I think he is afraid of him, the Tetrarch. Art thou, even thou, also afraid of him, Narraboth?

The Young Syrian. I fear him not, Princess; there is no man I fear. But the Tetrarch has formally forbidden that any man shall raise the cover of his well.

Salome. Thou wilt do this thing for me, Narraboth, and to-morrow when I pass in my litter beneath the gateway of the idol-sellers I will let fall for thee a little flower, a little green flower.

The Young Syrian. Princess, I cannot, I cannot.

Salome. (*Smiling.*) Thou wilt do this thing for me, Narraboth. Thou knowest that thou wilt do this thing for me. And on the morrow when I shall pass in my litter by the bridge of the idol-buyers, I will look at thee through the muslin veils, I will look at thee, Narraboth, it may be I will smile at thee. Look at me, Narraboth, look at me. Ah! thou knowest that thou wilt do what I ask of thee. Thou knowest it. . . I know thou wilt do this for me.

The Young Syrian. (*Signing to the third Soldier.*) Let the prophet come forth. . . The Princess Salome desires to see him.

Salome. Ah!

The Page of Herodias. Oh! How strange the moon looks. Like the hand of a dead woman who is seeking to cover herself with a shroud.

The Young Syrian. She has a strange aspect! She is like a little princess, whose eyes are eyes of amber. Through the clouds of muslin she is smiling like a little princess. (*The prophet comes out of the cistern. Salome looks at him and steps slowly back.*)

Iokanaan. Where is he whose cup of abominations is now full? Where is he, who in a robe of silver shall one day die in the face of all the people? Bid him come forth, that he may hear the voice of him who hath cried in the waste places and in the houses of kings.

Salome. Of whom is he speaking?

The Young Syrian. No one can tell, Princess.

Iokanaan. Where is she who saw the images of men painted on the walls, even the images of the Chaldæans painted with colours, and gave herself up unto the lust of her eyes, and sent ambassadors into the land of Chaldæa?

Salome. It is of my mother that he is speaking.

The Young Syrian. Oh no, Princess.

Salome. Yes; it is of my mother that he is speaking.

Iokanaan. Where is she who gave herself unto the Captains of Assyria, who have baldricks on their loins, and crowns of many colours on their heads? Where is she who hath given herself to the young men of the Egyptians, who are clothed in fine linen and hyacinth, whose shields are of gold, whose helmets are of silver, whose bodies are mighty? Go, bid her rise up from the bed of her abominations, from the bed of her incestuousness, that she may hear the words of him who prepareth the way of the Lord, that she may repent her of her iniquities. Though she will not repent, but will stick fast in her abominations, go bid her come, for the fan of the Lord is in His hand.

Salome. Ah, but he is terrible, he is terrible.

The Young Syrian. Do not stay here, Princess, I beseech you.

Salome. It is his eyes above all that are terrible. They are like black holes burned by torches in a tapestry of Tyre. They are like the black caverns where the dragons live, the black caverns of Egypt in which the dragons make their lairs. They are like black lakes troubled by fantastic moons. . . Do you think he will speak again?

The Young Syrian. Do not stay here, Princess. I pray you do not stay here.

Salome. How wasted he is! He is like a thin ivory statue. He is like an image of silver. I am sure he is chaste, as the moon is. He is like a moonbeam, like a shaft of silver. His flesh must be very cold, cold as ivory. . . I would look closer at him.

The Young Syrian. No, no, Princess!

Salome. I must look at him closer.

The Young Syrian. Princess! Princess!

Iokanaan. Who is this woman who is looking at me? I will not have her look at me. Wherefore doth she look at me, with her golden eyes, under her gilded eyelids? I know not who she is. I do not desire to know who she is. Bid her begone. It is not to her that I would speak.

Salome. I am Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judæa.

Iokanaan. Back! daughter of Babylon! Come not near the chosen of the Lord. Thy mother hath filled the earth with the wine of her iniquities, and the cry of her sinning hath come up even to the ears of God.

Salome. Speak again, Iokanaan. Thy voice is as music to mine ear.

The Young Syrian. Princess! Princess! Princess!

Salome. Speak again! Speak again, Iokanaan, and tell me what I must do.

Iokanaan. Daughter of Sodom, come not near me! But cover thy face with a veil, and scatter ashes upon thine head, and get thee to the desert, and seek out the Son of Man.

Salome. Who is he, the Son of Man? Is he as beautiful as thou art, Iokanaan?

Iokanaan. Get thee behind me! I hear in the palace the beating of the wings of the angel of death.

The Young Syrian. Princess, I beseech thee to go within.

Iokanaan. Angel of the Lord God, what dost thou here with thy sword? Whom seekest thou in this palace? The day of him who shall die in a robe of silver has not yet come.

Salome. Iokanaan!

Iokanaan. Who speaketh?

Salome. I am amorous of thy body, Iokanaan! Thy body is white, like the lilies of a field that the mower hath never mowed. Thy body is white like the snows that lie on the mountains of Judæa, and come down into the valleys. The roses in the garden of the Queen of Arabia are not so white as thy body. Neither the roses of the garden of the Queen of Arabia, the garden of spices of the Queen of Arabia, nor the feet of the dawn when they light on the leaves, nor the breast of the moon when she lies on the breast of the sea. . . There is nothing in the world so white as thy body. Suffer me to touch thy body.

Iokanaan. Back! daughter of Babylon! By woman came evil into the world. Speak not to me. I will not listen to thee. I listen but to the voice of the Lord God.

Salome. Thy body is hideous. It is like the body of a leper. It is like a plastered wall, where vipers have crawled; like a plastered wall where the scorpions have made their nest. It is like a whited sepulchre, full of loathsome things. It is horrible, thy body is horrible. It is of thy hair that I am enamoured, Iokanaan. Thy hair is like clusters of grapes, like the clusters of black grapes, that hang from the vine-trees of Edom in the land of the Edomites. Thy hair is like the cedars of Lebanon, like the great cedars of Lebanon that give their shade to the lions and to the robbers who would hide them by day. The long black nights, when the moon hides her face, when the stars are afraid, are not so black as thy hair. The silence that dwells in the forest is not so black. There is nothing in the world that is so black as thy hair. . . . Suffer me to touch thy hair.

Iokanaan. Back, daughter of Sodom! Touch me not. Profane not the temple of the Lord God.

Salome. Thy hair is horrible. It is covered with mire and dust. It is like a crown of thorns placed on thy head. It is like a knot of serpents coiled around thy neck. I love not thy hair. . . . It is thy mouth that I desire, Iokanaan. Thy mouth is like a band of scarlet on a tower of ivory. It is like a pomegranate cut in twain with a knife of ivory. The pomegranate flowers that blossom in the gardens of Tyre, and are redder than roses, are not so red. The red blasts of trumpets that herald the approach of kings, and make afraid the enemy, are not so red. Thy mouth is redder than the feet of those who tread the wine in the wine-press. It is redder than the feet of the doves who inhabit the temples and are fed by the priests. It is redder than the feet of him who cometh from a forest where he hath slain a lion, and seen gilded tigers. Thy mouth is like a branch of coral that fishers have found in the twilight of the sea, the coral that they keep for the kings! . . . It is like the vermilion that the Moabites find in the mines of Moab, the vermilion that the kings take from them. It is like the bow of the King of the Persians, that is painted with vermilion, and is tipped with coral. There is nothing in the world so red as thy mouth. . . . Suffer me to kiss thy mouth.

Iokanaan. Never! daughter of Babylon! Daughter of Sodom! never!

Salome. I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan. I will kiss thy mouth.

The Young Syrian. Princess, Princess, thou who art like a garden of myrrh, thou who art the dove of all doves, look not at this man, look not at him! Do not speak such words to him. I cannot endure it. . . . Princess, do not speak these things.

Salome. I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan.

The Young Syrian. Ah! (*He kills himself, and falls between Salome and Iokanaan.*)

The Page of Herodias. The young Syrian has slain himself! The young captain has slain himself! He has slain himself who was my friend! I gave him a little box of perfumes and ear-rings wrought in silver, and now he has killed himself! Ah, did he not say that some misfortune would happen? I, too, said it, and it has come to pass. Well I knew that the moon was seeking a dead thing, but I knew not that it was he whom she sought. Ah! why did I not hide him from the moon? If I had hidden him in a cavern she would not have seen him.

First Soldier. Princess, the young captain has just slain himself.

Salome. Suffer me to kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan.

Iokanaan. Art thou not afraid, daughter of Herodias? Did I not tell that I heard in the palace the beatings of the wings of the angel of death, and hath he not come, the angel of death?

Salome. Suffer me to kiss thy mouth.

Iokanaan. Daughter of adultery, there is but one who can save thee.

It is He of whom I spake. Go seek him. He is in a boat on the sea of Galilee, and He talketh with His disciples. Kneel down on the shore of the sea, and call unto Him by His name. When he cometh to thee, and to all who call on Him, He cometh, bow thyself at his feet and ask of Him the remission of thy sins.

Salome. Suffer me to kiss thy mouth.

Iokanaan. Cursed be thou! daughter of an incestuous mother, be thou accursed!

Salome. I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan.

Iokanaan. I will not look at thee. Thou art accursed, Salome, thou art accursed. (*He goes down into the cistern.*)

Salome. I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan; I will kiss thy mouth.

First Soldier. We must bear away the body to another place. The Tetrarch does not care to see dead bodies, save the bodies of those whom he himself has slain.

The Page of Herodias. He was my brother, and nearer to me than a brother. I gave him a little box full of perfumes, and a ring of agate that he wore always on his hand. In the evening we were wont to walk by the river, and among the almond-trees, and he used to tell me of the things of his country. He spake ever very low. The sound of his voice was like the sound of the flute, of one who playeth upon the flute. Also he had much joy to gaze at himself in the river. I used to reproach him for that.

Second Soldier. You are right; we must hide the body. The Tetrarch must not see it.

First Soldier. The Tetrarch will not come to this place. He never comes on the terrace. He is too much afraid of the prophet.

(*Enter Herod, Herodias, and all the Court.*)

Herod. Where is Salome? Where is the Princess? Why did she not return to the banquet as I commanded her? Ah! there she is!

Herodias. You must not look at her! You are always looking at her!

Herod. The moon has a strange look to-night. Has she not a strange look? She is like a mad woman who is seeking everywhere for lovers. She is naked too. She is quite naked. The clouds are seeking to cover her nakedness, but she will not let them. She shows herself naked in the sky. She reels through the clouds like a drunken woman. . . . I am sure she is looking for lovers. Does she not reel like a drunken woman? She is like a mad woman, is she not?

Herodias. No; the moon is like the moon, that is all. Let us go within. . . . We have nothing to do here.

Herod. I will stay here! Manasseh, lay carpets here. Light torches. Bring forth the ivory tables, and the tables of jasper. The air

here is sweet. I will drink more wine with my guests. We must show all honours to the ambassadors of Cæsar.

Herodias. It is not because of them that you remain.

Herod. Yes; the air is very sweet. Come, Herodias, our guests await us. Ah! I have slipped. I have slipped in blood. It is an ill omen. It is a very ill omen. Wherefore is there blood here? . . . and this body, what does this body here? Think you I am like the King of Egypt, who gives no feast to his guests but that he shows them a corpse? Whose is it? I will not look on it.

First Soldier. It is our captain, sire. It is the young Syrian whom you made captain of the guard but three days gone.

Herod. I issued no order that he should be slain.

Second Soldier. He slew himself, sire.

Herod. For what reason? I had made him captain of my guard!

Second Soldier. We do not know, sire. But with his own hand he slew himself.

Herod. That seems strange to me. I had thought it was but the Roman philosophers who slew themselves. Is it not true, Tigellinus, that the philosophers at Rome slay themselves?

Tigellinus. There be some who slay themselves, sire. They are the Stoics. The Stoics are people of no cultivation. They are ridiculous people. I myself regard them as being perfectly ridiculous.

Herod. I also. It is ridiculous to kill one's self.

Tigellinus. Everybody at Rome laughs at them. The Emperor has written a satire against them. It is recited everywhere.

Herod. Ah! he has written a satire against them? Cæsar is wonderful. He can do everything. . . . It is strange that the young Syrian has slain himself. I am sorry he has slain himself. I am very sorry. For he was fair to look upon. He was even very fair. He had very languorous eyes. I remember that I saw that he looked languorously at Salome. Truly, I thought he looked too much at her.

Herodias. There are others who look too much at her.

Herod. His father was a king. I drave him from his kingdom. And of his mother, who was a queen, you made a slave, Herodias. So he was here as my guest, as it were, and for that reason I made him my captain. I am sorry he is dead. Ho! why have you left the body here? It must be taken to some other place. I will not look at it,—away with it! (*They take away the body.*) It is cold here. There is a wind blowing. Is there not a wind blowing?

Herodias. No; there is no wind.

Herod. I tell you there is a wind that blows. . . . And I hear in the air something that is like the beating of wings, like the beating of vast wings. Do you not hear it?

Herodias. I hear nothing.

Herod. I hear it no longer. But I heard it. It was the blowing of the wind. It has passed away. But no, I hear it again. Do you not hear it? It is just like a beating of wings.

Herodias. I tell you there is nothing. You are ill. Let us go within.

Herod. I am not ill. It is your daughter who is sick to death. Never have I seen her so pale.

Herodias. I have told you not to look at her.

Herod. Pour me forth wine. (*Wine is brought.*) Salome, come drink a little wine with me. I have here a wine that is exquisite. Cæsar himself sent it me. Dip into it thy little red lips, that I may drain the cup.

Salome. I am not thirsty, Tetrarch.

Herod. You hear how she answers me, this daughter of yours?

Herodias. She does right. Why are you always gazing at her?

Herod. Bring me ripe fruits. (*Fruits are brought.*) Salome, come and eat fruits with me. I love to see in a fruit the mark of thy little teeth. Bite but a little of this fruit, that I may eat what is left.

Salome. I am not hungry, Tetrarch.

Herod (*to Herodias*). You see how you have brought up this daughter of yours.

Herodias. My daughter and I come of a royal race. As for thee, thy father was a camel driver! He was a thief and a robber to boot!

Herod. Thou liest!

Herodias. Thou knowest well that it is true.

Herod. Salome, come and sit next to me. I will give thee the throne of thy mother.

Salome. I am not tired, Tetrarch.

Herodias. You see in what regard she holds you.

Herod. Bring me—What is it that I desire? I forget. Ah! ah! I remember.

The Voice of Iokanaan. Behold the time is come! That which I foretold has come to pass. The day that I spake of is at hand.

Herodias. Bid him be silent. I will not listen to his voice. This man is for ever hurling insults against me.

Herod. He has said nothing against you. Besides, he is a very great prophet.

Herodias. I do not believe in prophets. Can a man tell what will come to pass? No man knows it. Also he is for ever insulting me. But I think you are afraid of him. . . . I know well that you are afraid of him.

Herod. I am not afraid of him. I am afraid of no man.

Herodias. I tell you you are afraid of him. If you are not afraid of him why do you not deliver him to the Jews who for these six months past have been clamouring for him?

A Jew. Truly, my lord, it were better to deliver him into our hands.

Herod. Enough on this subject. I have already given you my answer. I will not deliver him into your hands. He is a holy man. He is a man who has seen God.

A Jew. That cannot be. There is no man who hath seen God since the prophet Elias. He is the last man who saw God face to face. In these days God doth not show Himself. God hideth Himself. Therefore great evils have come upon the land.

Another Jew. Verily, no man knoweth if Elias the prophet did indeed see God. Peradventure it was but the shadow of God that he saw.

A Third Jew. God is at no time hidden. He showeth Himself at all times and in all places. God is in what is evil even as He is in what is good.

A Fourth Jew. Thou shouldst not say that. It is a very dangerous doctrine. It is a doctrine that cometh from Alexandria, where men teach the philosophy of the Greeks. And the Greeks are Gentiles. They are not even circumcised.

A Fifth Jew. No man can tell how God worketh. His ways are very dark. It may be that the things which we call evil are good, and that the things which we call good are evil. There is no knowledge of anything. We can but bow our heads to His will, for God is very strong. He breaketh in pieces the strong, together with the weak, for He regardeth not any man.

First Jew. Thou speakest truly. Verily, God is terrible. He breaketh in pieces the strong and the weak as men break corn in a mortar. But as for this man, he hath never seen God. No man hath seen God since the prophet Elias.

Herodias. Make them be silent. They weary me.

Herod. But I have heard it said that Iokanaan is in very truth your prophet Elias.

The Jew. That cannot be. It is more than three hundred years since the days of the prophet Elias.

Herod. There be some who say that this man is Elias the prophet.

A Nazarene. I am sure that he is Elias the prophet.

The Jew. Nay, but he is not Elias the prophet.

The Voice of Iokanaan. Behold the day is at hand, the day of the Lord, and I hear upon the mountains the feet of Him who shall be the Saviour of the world.

Herod. What does that mean? The Saviour of the world?

Tigellinus. It is a title that Cæsar adopts.

Herod. But Cæsar is not coming into Judæa. Only yesterday I re-

ceived letters from Rome. They contained nothing concerning this matter. And you, Tigellinus, who were at Rome during the winter, you heard nothing concerning this matter, did you?

Tigellinus. Sire, I heard nothing concerning the matter. I was but explaining the title. It is one of Cæsar's titles.

Herod. But Cæsar cannot come. He is too gouty. They say that his feet are like the feet of an elephant. Also there are reasons of state. He who leaves Rome loses Rome. He will not come. Howbeit, Cæsar is lord, he will come if such be his pleasure. Nevertheless, I think he will not come.

First Nazarene. It was not concerning Cæsar that the prophet spake these words, sire.

Herod. How?—it was not concerning Cæsar?

First Nazarene. No, my lord.

Herod. Concerning whom then did he speak?

First Nazarene. Concerning Messias, who hath come.

A Jew. Messias hath not come.

First Nazarene. He hath come, and everywhere he worketh miracles!

Herodias. Ho! ho! miracles! I do not believe in miracles. I have seen too many. (*To the Page.*) My fan.

First Nazarene. This man worketh true miracles. Thus, at a marriage which took place in a little town of Galilee, a town of some importance, he changed water into wine. Certain persons who were present related it to me. Also he healed two lepers that were seated before the Gate of Capernaum simply by touching them.

Second Nazarene. Nay; it was two blind men that he healed at Capernaum.

First Nazarene. Nay; they were lepers. But he hath healed blind people also, and he was seen on a mountain talking with angels.

A Sadducee. Angels do not exist.

A Pharisee. Angels exist, but I do not believe that this man has talked with them.

First Nazarene. He was seen by a great multitude of people talking with angels.

Herodias. How these men weary me! They are ridiculous! They are altogether ridiculous! (*To the Page.*) Well! my fan? (*The Page gives her the fan.*) You have a dreamer's look. You must not dream. It is only sick people who dream. (*She strikes the Page with her fan.*)

Second Nazarene. There is also the miracle of the daughter of Jairus.

First Nazarene. Yea, that is sure. No man can gainsay it.

Herodias. Those men are mad. They have looked too long on the

moon. Command them to be silent.

Herod. What is this miracle of the daughter of Jairus?

First Nazarene. The daughter of Jairus was dead. This Man raised her from the dead!

Herod. How! He raises people from the dead?

First Nazarene. Yea, sire; He raiseth the dead.

Herod. I do not wish Him to do that. I forbid Him to do that. I suffer no man to raise the dead. This Man must be found and told that I forbid Him to raise the dead. Where is this Man at present?

Second Nazarene. He is in every place, my lord, but it is hard to find Him.

First Nazarene. It is said that He is now in Samaria.

A Jew. It is easy to see that this is not Messias, if He is in Samaria. It is not to the Samaritans that Messias shall come. The Samaritans are accursed. They bring no offerings to the Temple.

Second Nazarene. He left Samaria a few days since. I think that at the present moment He is in the neighborhood of Jerusalem.

First Nazarene. No; He is not there. I have just come from Jerusalem. For two months they have had no tidings of Him.

Herod. No matter! But let them find Him, and tell Him, thus saith Herod the King, 'I will not suffer Thee to raise the dead.' To change water into wine, to heal the lepers and the blind. . . . He may do these things if He will. I say nothing against these things. In truth I hold it a kindly deed to cure a leper. But no man shall raise the dead. . . . It would be terrible if the dead came back.

The Voice of Iokanaan. Ah! The wanton one! The harlot! Ah! the daughter of Babylon with her golden eyes and her gilded eyelids! Thus saith the Lord God, let there come up against her a multitude of men. Let the people take stones and stone her. . . .

Herodias. Command him to be silent!

The Voice of Iokanaan. Let the captains of the hosts pierce her with their swords, let them crush her beneath their shields.

Herodias. Nay, but it is infamous.

The Voice of Iokanaan. It is thus that I will wipe out all wickedness from the earth, and that all women shall learn not to imitate her abominations.

Herodias. You hear what he says against me? You suffer him to revile her who is your wife!

Herod. He did not speak your name.

Herodias. What does that matter? You know well that it is I whom he seeks to revile. And I am your wife, am I not?

Herod. Of a truth, dear and noble Herodias, you are my wife, and before that you were the wife of my brother.

Herodias. It was thou didst snatch me from his arms.

Herod. Of a truth I was stronger than he was. . . . But let us not talk of that matter. I do not desire to talk of it. It is the cause of the terrible words that the prophet has spoken. Peradventure on account of it a misfortune will come. Let us not speak of this matter. Noble Herodias, we are not mindful of our guests. Fill thou my cup, my well-beloved. Ho! fill with wine the great goblets of silver, and the great goblets of glass. I will drink to Cæsar. There are Romans here, we must drink to Cæsar.

All. Cæsar! Cæsar!

Herod. Do you not see your daughter, how pale she is?

Herodias. What is that to you if she be pale or not?

Herod. Never have I seen her so pale.

Herodias. You must not look at her.

The Voice of Iokanaan. In that day the sun shall become black like sackcloth of hair, and the moon shall become like blood, and the stars of the heaven shall fall upon the earth like unripe figs that fall from the fig-tree, and the kings of the earth shall be afraid.

Herodias. Ah! ah! I should like to see that day of which he speaks, when the moon shall become like blood, and when the stars shall fall upon the earth like unripe figs. This prophet talks like a drunken man, . . . but I cannot suffer the sound of his voice. I hate his voice. Command him to be silent.

Herod. I will not. I cannot understand what it is that he saith, but it may be an omen.

Herodias. I do not believe in omens. He speaks like a drunken man.

Herod. It may be he is drunk with the wine of God.

Herodias. What wine is that, the wine of God? From what vineyards is it gathered? In what wine-press may one find it?

Herod (*From this point he looks all the while at Salome*). Tigellinus, when you were at Rome of late, did the Emperor speak with you on the subject of . . . ?

Tigellinus. On what subject, my lord?

Herod. On what subject? Ah! I asked you a question, did I not? I have forgotten what I would have asked you.

Herodias. You are looking again at my daughter. You must not look at her. I have already said so.

Herod. You say nothing else.

Herodias. I say it again.

Herod. And that restoration of the Temple about which they have talked so much, will anything be done? They say that the veil of the

Sanctuary has disappeared, do they not?

Herodias. It was thyself didst steal it. Thou speakest at random and without wit. I will not stay here. Let us go within.

Herod. Dance for me, Salome.

Herodias. I will not have her dance.

Salome. I have no desire to dance, Tetrarch.

Herod. Salome, daughter of Herodias, dance for me.

Herodias. Peace. Let her alone.

Herod. I command thee to dance, Salome.

Salome. I will not dance, Tetrarch.

Herodias (*Laughing*). You see how she obeys you.

Herod. What is it to me whether she dance or not? It is nought to me. To-night I am happy. I am exceedingly happy. Never have I been so happy.

First Soldier. The Tetrarch has a sombre look. Has he not a sombre look?

Second Soldier. Yes, he has a sombre look.

Herod. Wherefore should I not be happy? Cæsar, who is lord of the world, Cæsar, who is lord of all things, loves me well. He has just sent me most precious gifts. Also he has promised me to summon to Rome the King of Cappadocia, who is mine enemy. It may be that at Rome he will crucify him, for he is able to do all things that he has a mind to. Verily, Cæsar is lord. Therefore I do well to be happy. I am very happy, never have I been so happy. There is nothing in the world that can mar my happiness.

The Voice of Iokanaan. He shall be seated on his throne. He shall be clothed in scarlet and purple. In his hand he shall bear a golden cup full of his blasphemies. And the angel of the Lord shall smite him. He shall be eaten of worms.

Herodias. You hear what he says about you. He says that you shall be eaten of worms.

Herod. It is not of me that he speaks. He speaks never against me. It is of the King of Cappadocia that he speaks; the King of Cappadocia who is mine enemy. It is he who shall be eaten of worms. It is not I. Never has he spoken word against me, this prophet, save that I sinned in taking to wife the wife of my brother. It may be he is right. For, of a truth, you are sterile.

Herodias. I am sterile, I? You say that, you that are ever looking at my daughter, you that would have her dance for your pleasure? You speak as a fool. I have borne a child. You have gotten no child, no, not on one of your slaves. It is you who are sterile, not I.

Herod. Peace, woman! I say that you are sterile. You have borne me no child, and the prophet says that our marriage is not a true marriage.

He says that it is a marriage of incest, a marriage that will bring evils. . . . I fear he is right; I am sure that he is right. But it is not the hour to speak of these things. I would be happy at this moment. Of a truth, I am happy. There is nothing I lack.

Herodias. I am glad you are of so fair a humour to-night. It is not your custom. But it is late. Let us go within. Do not forget that we hunt at sunrise. All honours must be shown to Cæsar's ambassadors, must they not?

Second Soldier. The Tetrarch has a sombre look.

First Soldier. Yes, he has a sombre look.

Herod. Salome, Salome, dance for me. I pray thee dance for me. I am sad to-night. Yes, I am passing sad to-night. When I came hither I slipped in blood, which is an evil omen; also I heard in the air a beating of wings, a beating of giant wings. I cannot tell what they may mean. . . . I am sad tonight. Therefore dance for me. Dance for me, Salome, I beseech thee. If thou dancest for me thou mayest ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it thee. Yes, dance for me, Salome, and whatsoever thou shalt ask of me I will give it thee, even unto the half of my kingdom.

Salome (*Rising*). Will you indeed give me whatsoever I shall ask of you, Tetrarch?

Herodias. Do not dance, my daughter.

Herod. Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, even unto the half of my kingdom.

Salome. You swear it, Tetrarch?

Herod. I swear it, Salome.

Herodias. Do not dance, my daughter.

Salome. By what will you swear this thing, Tetrarch?

Herod. By my life, by my crown, by my gods. Whatsoever thou shalt desire I will give it thee, even to the half of my kingdom, if thou wilt but dance for me. O Salome, Salome, dance for me!

Salome. You have sworn an oath, Tetrarch.

Herod. I have sworn an oath.

Herodias. My daughter, do not dance.

Herod. Even to the half of my kingdom. Thou wilt be passing fair as a queen, Salome, if it please thee to ask for the half of my kingdom. Will she not be fair as a queen? Ah! it is cold here! There is an icy wind, and I hear . . . wherefore do I hear in the air this beating of wings? Ah! one might fancy a huge black bird that hovers over the terrace. Why can I not see it, this bird? The beat of its wings is terrible. The breath of the wind of its wings is terrible. It is a chill wind. Nay, but it is not cold, it is hot. I am choking. Pour water on my hands. Give me snow to eat. Loosen my mantle. Quick! quick!

loosen my mantle. Nay, but leave it. It is my garland that hurts me, my garland of roses. The flowers are like fire. They have burned my forehead. (*He tears the wreath from his head, and throws it on the table.*) Ah! I can breathe now. How red those petals are! They are like stains of blood on the cloth. That does not matter. It is not wise to find symbols in everything that one sees. It makes life too full of terrors. It were better to say that stains of blood are as lovely as rose-petals. It were better far to say that. . . . But we will not speak of this. Now I am happy. I am passing happy. Have I not the right to be happy? Your daughter is going to dance for me. Wilt thou not dance for me, Salome? Thou hast promised to dance for me.

Herodias. I will not have her dance.

Salome. I will dance for you, Tetrarch.

Herod. You hear what your daughter says. She is going to dance for me. Thou doest well to dance for me, Salome. And when thou hast danced for me, forget not to ask of me whatsoever thou hast a mind to ask. Whatsoever thou shalt desire I will give it thee, even to the half of my kingdom. I have sworn it, have I not?

Salome. Thou hast sworn it, Tetrarch.

Herod. And I have never failed of my word. I am not of those who break their oaths. I know not how to lie. I am the slave of my word, and my word is the word of a king. The King of Cappadocia had ever a lying tongue, but he is no true king. He is a coward. Also he owes me money that he will not repay. He has even insulted my ambassadors. He has spoken words that were wounding. But Cæsar will crucify him when he comes to Rome. I know that Cæsar will crucify him. And if he crucify him not, yet will he die, being eaten of worms. The prophet has prophesied it. Well! Wherefore dost thou tarry, Salome?

Salome. I am waiting until my slaves bring perfumes to me and the seven veils, and take from off my feet my sandals. (*Slaves bring perfumes and the seven veils, and take off the sandals of Salome.*)

Herod. Ah, thou art to dance with naked feet! 'Tis well! 'Tis well! Thy little feet will be like white doves. They will be like little white flowers that dance upon the trees. . . . No, no, she is going to dance on blood! There is blood spilt on the ground. She must not dance on blood. It were an evil omen.

Herodias. What is it to thee if she dance on blood? Thou hast waded deep enough in it. . . .

Herod. What is it to me? Ah! look at the moon! She has become red. She has become red as blood. Ah! the prophet prophesied truly. He prophesied that the moon would become as blood. Did he not prophesy it? All of ye heard him prophesying it. And now the moon

has become as blood. Do ye not see it?

Herodias. Oh, yes, I see it well, and the stars are falling like unripe figs, are they not? And the sun is becoming black like sackcloth of hair, and the kings of the earth are afraid. That at least one can see. The prophet is justified of his words in that at least, for truly the kings of the earth are afraid. . . . Let us go within. You are sick. They will say at Rome that you are mad. Let us go within, I tell you.

The Voice of Iokanaan. Who is this who cometh from Edom, who is this who cometh from Bozra, whose raiment is dyed with purple, who shineth in the beauty of his garments, who walketh mighty in his greatness? Wherefore is thy raiment stained with scarlet?

Herodias. Let us go within. The voice of that man maddens me. I will not have my daughter dance while he is continually crying out. I will not have her dance while you look at her in this fashion. In a word, I will not have her dance.

Herod. Do not rise, my wife, my queen, it will avail thee nothing. I will not go within till she hath danced. Dance, Salome, dance for me.

Herodias. Do not dance, my daughter.

Salome. I am ready, Tetrarch.

(*Salome dances the dance of the seven veils.*)

Herod. Ah! wonderful! wonderful! You see that she has danced for me, your daughter. Come near, Salome, come near, that I may give thee thy fee. Ah! I pay a royal price to those who dance for my pleasure. I will pay thee royally. I will give thee whatsoever thy soul desireth. What wouldst thou have? Speak.

Salome (*Kneeling*). I would that they presently bring me a silver charger. . . .

Herod (*Laughing*). In a silver charger? Surely yes, in a silver charger. She is charming is she not? What is it thou wouldst have in a silver charger, O sweet and fair Salome, thou that art fairer than all the daughters of Judæa? What wouldst thou have them bring thee in a silver charger? Tell me. Whatsoever it may be, thou shalt receive it. My treasures belong to thee. What is it that thou wouldst have, Salome?

Salome (*Rising*). The head of Iokanaan.

Herodias. Ah! that is well said, my daughter.

Herod. No, no!

Herodias. That is well said, my daughter.

Herod. No, no, Salome. It is not that thou desirest. Do not listen to thy mother's voice. She is ever giving thee evil counsel. Do not heed her.

Salome. It is not my mother's voice that I heed. It is for mine own pleasure that I ask the head of Iokanaan in a silver charger. You

have sworn an oath, Herod. Forget not that you have sworn an oath.

Herod. I know it. I have sworn an oath by my gods. I know it well. But I pray thee, Salome, ask of me something else. Ask of me the half of my kingdom, and I will give it thee. But ask not of me what thy lips have asked.

Salome. I ask of you the head of Iokanaan.

Herod. No, no, I will not give it thee.

Salome. You have sworn an oath, Herod.

Herodias. Yes, you have sworn an oath. Everybody heard you. You swore it before everybody.

Herod. Peace, woman! It is not to you I speak.

Herodias. My daughter has done well to ask the head of Iokanaan. He has covered me with insults. He has said unspeakable things against me. One can see that she loves her mother well. Do not yield, my daughter. He has sworn an oath, he has sworn an oath.

Herod. Peace! Speak not to me! . . . Salome, I pray thee be not stubborn. I have ever been kind toward thee. I have ever loved thee. . . . It may be that I have loved thee too much. Therefore ask not this thing of me. This is a terrible thing, an awful thing to ask of me. Surely, I think thou art jesting. The head of a man that is cut from his body is ill to look upon, is it not? It is not meet that the eyes of a virgin should look upon such a thing. What pleasure couldst thou have in it. There is no pleasure that thou couldst have in it. No, no, it is not that thou desirest. Hearken to me. I have an emerald, a great emerald and round, that the minion of Cæsar has sent unto me. When thou lookest through this emerald thou canst see that which passeth afar off. Cæsar himself carries such an emerald when he goes to the circus. But my emerald is the larger. I know well that it is the larger. It is the largest emerald in the whole world. Thou wilt take that, wilt thou not? Ask it of me and I will give it thee.

Salome. I demand the head of Iokanaan.

Herod. Thou art not listening. Thou art not listening. Suffer me to speak, Salome.

Salome. The head of Iokanaan.

Herod. No, no, thou wouldst not have that. Thou sayest that but to trouble me, because that I have looked at thee and ceased not this night. It is true, I have looked at thee and ceased not this night. Thy beauty has troubled me. Thy beauty has grievously troubled me, and I have looked at thee overmuch. Nay, but I will look at thee no more. One should not look at anything. Neither at things, nor at people should one look. Only in mirrors is it well to look, for mirrors do but show us masks. Oh! oh! bring wine! I thirst. . . . Salome, Salome, let us be as friends. Bethink thee. . . . Ah! what would I say? What was't?

Ah! I remember it! . . . Salome,—nay, but come nearer to me; I fear thou wilt not hear my words,—Salome, thou knowest my white peacocks, my beautiful white peacocks, that walk in the garden between the myrtles and the tall cypress trees. Their beaks are gilded with gold and the grains that they eat are smeared with gold, and their feet are stained with purple. When they cry out the rain comes, and the moon shows herself in the heavens when they spread their tails. Two by two they walk between the cypress trees and the black myrtles, and each has a slave to tend it. Sometimes they fly across the trees, and anon they couch in the grass, and round the pools of the water. There are not in all the world birds so wonderful. I know that Cæsar himself has no birds so fair as my birds. I will give thee fifty of my peacocks. They will follow thee whithersoever thou goest, and in the midst of them thou wilt be like unto the moon in the midst of a great white cloud. . . . I will give them to thee, all. I have but a hundred, and in the whole world there is no king who has peacocks like unto my peacocks. But I will give them all to thee. Only thou must loose me from my oath, and must not ask of me that which thy lips have asked of me. (*He empties the cup of wine.*)

Salome. Give me the head of Iokanaan.

Herodias. Well said, my daughter! As for you, you are ridiculous with your peacocks.

Herod. Peace! you are always crying out. You cry out like a beast of prey. You must not cry in such fashion. Your voice wearies me. Peace, I tell you! . . . Salome, think on what thou art doing. It may be that this man comes from God. He is a holy man. The finger of God has touched him. God has put terrible words into his mouth. In the palace, as in the desert, God is ever with him. . . . It may be that He is, at least. One cannot tell, but it is possible that God is with him and for him. If he die also, peradventure some evil may befall me. Verily, he has said that evil will befall some one on the day whereon he dies. On whom should it fall if it fall not on me? Remember, I slipped in blood when I came hither. Also did I not hear a beating of wings in the air, a beating of vast wings? These are ill omens. And there were other things. I am sure that there were other things, though I saw them not. Thou wouldst not that some evil should befall me, Salome? Listen to me again.

Salome. Give me the head of Iokanaan!

Herod. Ah! thou art not listening to me. Be calm. As for me, am I not calm? I am altogether calm. Listen. I have jewels hidden in this place—jewels that thy mother even has never seen; jewels that are marvellous to look at. I have a collar of pearls, set in four rows. They are like unto moons chained with rays of silver. They are even as half a hundred moons caught in a golden net. On the ivory breast of a queen

they have rested. Thou shalt be as fair as a queen when thou wearest them. I have amethysts of two kinds; one that is black like wine, and one that is red like wine that one has coloured with water. I have topazes yellow as are the eyes of tigers, and topazes that are pink as the eyes of a wood-pigeon, and green topazes that are as the eyes of cats. I have opals that burn always, with a flame that is cold as ice, opals that make sad men's minds, and are afraid of the shadows. I have onyxes like the eyeballs of a dead woman. I have moonstones that change when the moon changes; and are wan when they see the sun. I have sapphires big like eggs, and as blue as blue flowers. The sea wanders within them, and the moon comes never to trouble the blue of their waves. I have chrysolites and beryls, and chrysoprases and rubies; I have sardonyx and hyacinth stones, and stones of chalcedony, and I will give them all unto thee, all, and other things will I add to them. The King of the Indies has but even now sent me four fans fashioned from the feathers of parrots, and the King of Numidia a garment of ostrich feathers. I have a crystal, into which it is not lawful for a woman to look, nor may young men behold it until they have been beaten with rods. In a coffer of nacre I have three wondrous turquoises. He who wears them on his forehead can imagine things which are not, and he who carries them in his hand can turn the fruitful woman into a woman that is barren. These are great treasures above all price. But this is not all. In an ebony coffer I have two cups of amber that are like apples of pure gold. If an enemy pour poison into these cups they become like apples of silver. In a coffer incrusted with amber I have sandals incrusted with glass. I have mantles that have been brought from the land of the Seres, and bracelets decked about with carbuncles and with jade that come from the city of Euphrates. . . . What desirest thou more than this, Salome! Tell me the thing that thou desirest, and I will give it thee. All that thou askest I will give thee, save one thing only. I will give thee all that is mine, save only the life of one man. I will give thee the mantle of the high priest. I will give thee the veil of the sanctuary.

The Jews. Oh! oh!

Salome. Give me the head of Iokanaan!

Herod. (*Sinking back in his seat.*) Let her be given what she asks! Of a truth she is her mother's child! (*The first Soldier approaches. Herodias draws from the hand of the Tetrarch the ring of death, and gives it to the Soldier, who straightway bears it to the Executioner.* [*The Executioner looks scared.*) Who has taken my ring? There was a ring on my right hand. Who has drunk my wine? There was wine in my cup. It was full of wine. Some one has drunk it! Oh! surely some evil will befall some one. (*The Executioner goes down into the cistern.*) Ah! wherefore did I give my oath? Hereafter let no king swear an oath.

If he keep it not, it is terrible, and if he keep it, it is terrible also.

Herodias. My daughter has done well.

Herod. I am sure that some misfortune will happen.

Salome (*She leans over the cistern and listens*). There is no sound. I hear nothing. Why does he not cry out, this man? Ah! if any man sought to kill me, I would cry out, I would struggle, I would not suffer. . . . Strike, strike, Naaman, strike, I tell you. . . . No, I hear nothing. There is a silence, a terrible silence. Ah! something has fallen upon the ground. I heard something fall. It was the sword of the executioner. He is afraid, this slave. He has dropped his sword. He dares not kill him. He is a coward, this slave! Let soldiers be sent. (*She sees the Page of Herodias and addresses him.*) Come hither. Thou wert the friend of him who is dead, wert thou not? Well, I tell thee, there are not dead men enough. Go to the soldiers and bid them go down and bring me the thing I ask, the thing that the Tetrarch has promised me, the thing that is mine. (*The Page recoils. She turns to the soldiers.*) Hither, ye soldiers. Get ye down into this cistern and bring me the head of this man. Tetrarch, Tetrarch command your soldiers that they bring me the head of Iokanaan.

(*A huge black arm, the arm of the Executioner, comes forth from the cistern, bearing on a silver shield the head of Iokanaan. Salome seizes it. Herod hides his face with his cloak. Herodias smiles and fans herself. The Nazarenes fall on their knees and begin to pray.*)

Ah! thou wouldst not suffer me to kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan. Well! I will kiss it now. I will bite it with my teeth as one bites a ripe fruit. Yes, I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan. I said it; did I not say it? I said it. Ah! I will kiss it now. . . . But wherefore dost thou not look at me, Iokanaan? Thine eyes that were so terrible, so full of rage and scorn, are shut now. Wherefore are they shut? Open thine eyes! Lift up thine eyelids, Iokanaan! Wherefore dost thou not look at me? Art thou afraid of me, Iokanaan, that thou wilt not look at me? . . . And thy tongue, that was like a red snake darting poison, it moves no more, it speaks no words, Iokanaan, that scarlet viper that spat its venom upon me. It is strange, is it not? How is it that the red viper stirs no longer? . . . Thou wouldst have none of me, Iokanaan. Thou rejectedst me. Thou didst speak evil words against me. Thou didst bear thyself toward me as to a harlot, as to a woman that is a wanton, to me, Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judæa! Well, I still live, but thou art dead, and thy head belongs to me. I can do with it what I will. I can throw it to the dogs and to the birds of the air. That which the dogs leave, the birds of the air shall devour. . . . Ah, Iokanaan, Iokanaan, thou wert the man that I loved alone among men! All other men were hateful to me. But thou wert beautiful! Thy body was a column of ivory set

upon feet of silver. It was a garden full of doves and lilies of silver. It was a tower of silver decked with shields of ivory. There was nothing in the world so white as thy body. There was nothing in the world so black as thy hair. In the whole world there was nothing so red as thy mouth. Thy voice was a censer that scattered strange perfumes, and when I looked on thee I heard a strange music. Ah! wherefore didst thou not look at me, Iokanaan? With the cloak of thine hands, and with the cloak of thy blasphemies thou didst hide thy face. Thou didst put upon thine eyes the covering of him who would see his God. Well, thou hast seen thy God, Iokanaan, but me, me, thou didst never see. If thou hadst seen me thou hadst loved me. I saw thee, and I loved thee. Oh, how I loved thee! I love thee yet, Iokanaan. I love only thee.... I am athirst for thy beauty; I am hungry for thy body; and neither wine nor apples can appease my desire. What shall I do now, Iokanaan? Neither the floods nor the great waters can quench my passion. I was a princess, and thou didst scorn me. I was a virgin, and thou didst take my virginity from me. I was chaste, and thou didst fill my veins with fire. . . . Ah! ah! wherefore didst thou not look at me? If thou hadst looked at me thou hadst loved me. Well I know that thou wouldst have loved me, and the mystery of Love is greater than the mystery of Death.

Herod. She is monstrous, thy daughter; I tell thee she is monstrous. In truth, what she has done is a great crime. I am sure that it is a crime against some unknown God.

Herodias. I am well pleased with my daughter. She has done well. And I would stay here now.

Herod (*Rising*). Ah! There speaks my brother's wife! Come! I will not stay in this place. Come, I tell thee. Surely some terrible thing will befall. Manasseh, Issachar, Ozias, put out the torches. I will not look at things, I will not suffer things to look at me. Put out the torches! Hide the moon! Hide the stars! Let us hide ourselves in our palace, Herodias. I begin to be afraid.

(*The slaves put out the torches. The stars disappear. A great cloud crosses the moon and conceals it completely. The stage becomes quite dark. The Tetrarch begins to climb the staircase.*)

The Voice of Salome. Ah! I have kissed thy mouth, Iokanaan, I have kissed thy mouth. There was a bitter taste on thy lips. Was it the taste of blood? . . . Nay; but perchance it was the taste of love. . . . They say that love hath a bitter taste. . . . But what matter? what matter? I have kissed thy mouth, Iokanaan, I have kissed thy mouth.

(*A ray of moonlight falls on Salome and illuminates her.*)

Herod. (*Turning round and seeing Salome.*) Kill that woman!

(*The soldiers rush forward and crush beneath their shields Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judaea.*)

(CURTAIN.)

POETRY

By Louis J. Block

NO people has been so rude as to be without a rhythmical chant or chorus of some kind, which, even if its form has made it seem like prose, has not had some of the qualities which belong to verse. The northern peoples have sung of their long and terrible winters and of the heroism which has snatched from the very jaws and grasp of the ice-gods the means of subsistence and the triumph which has produced the arts of life and the possibility of a freer and better existence. With the supremacy of the higher will and its establishment securely on the planes of combined human activity, the titanic dynasties of deities have found their twilight and sunk into their aboriginal places in the dark void and absym of the conquered and the foredone. The southern peoples dwelling nearer the light have avowed their kinship with the morning and through their poetry shone the radiances of a unity with the eternal which has ennobled the individual man and made his destiny a glory beaming from below the sky across which its triumphant passage is to be made. Everywhere and at all times the spontaneous songs of the peoples have sprung from their innermost hearts, and hope and aspiration have never been left without their melodious utterance. Hymns have everywhere been raised to propitiate deities of terrible aspect, or to give thank-offerings to gods whose smile soothed the gloom of human toilings stern and insistent to achieve a permanent possession of those elements which alone made life worth the living. Of all the arts poetry is the most widespread, the most home-bred, the most native to man, the most winning, the most consoling. Master of all the powers and charms which belong to the other arts, poetry is the very sun god who leads the train of the Muses.

The other arts have had their particular periods of fruition and ascendency. The great builders of the Orient and of Egypt have attempted to put into their immense structures the half-evolved thoughts, the vague and mighty dreams, the unanswered questions, which dominated their lives and fascinated them with glimpses of spiritual realms not yet securedly occupied by humanity. The perfection of human individuality, the serene possession of self-poised, self-equal manhood, the gracious and exquisite union of life and nature, the bodily beauty an exact and finished representation of the soul, found in Greek sculpture the perfect art which as Lowell says, 'is the one thing finished in this hasty world.' The mysterious ecstasies of monk and saint, the revelation of a deeper and more real world within and without this exterior one of touch and sight, the sufferings

of the God-head agonizing for the safety and return to himself of his wandering and desolate children, the opulence of love and glory flooding the heavens which yearn to receive the restored and transfigured into its rest and calm make a many colored pageant of splendor in the painting of the middle age. Even Music in its heights and successes has a special period and almost a special people and country; it had to wait until the present age when the feeling of the unity between the race and the Divine became so profound that its notes of exultation have built themselves into a pleasure house where the voice of pain and grief, in discords lost and dissipated around the prevailing harmony, sounds only as a reminiscence of a conflict waged to a victorious issue, and hardly touched any more with the pathos of regret. But poetry has not been confined to any age or country; it has reached its meridian again and again side by side with the other arts; what they have said, it has sung with freer cadence, with truer insight, with fuller revelation.

Poetry possesses thus a sort of universality in which the other arts are lacking. It appears to be more akin to the thought which embodies itself in it and to share that thought's power and omnipresence. Wherever insight has penetrated to those depths where dwell the mysterious Mothers, whom Faust was obliged to find before the world lay explained before him, wherever discovery has touched those truths which make the maze of this visible scene an order and a whole, wherever reason has found itself as the solvent word and beneficent substance of all, poetry in the first delight of the illumination accorded has arisen to voice the triumphant achievement. While the other arts are more or less localized and have submitted to various temporal conditions, poetry has had the entire globe for its own, and the complete expanse of the ages for the field of its development.

Indeed poetry transcends the whole of space and time. As Emerson says all songs have been written before time was, and the poet penetrates to the regions where they forever are, and brings thence what he hears and can remember. The poet reaches the eternal and necessary, and the material from which he constructs his visions partakes of that necessity and eternity. Even language, itself a product of mind and throughout reflecting the processes of thought, is more exterior to the life sought to be expressed than the image which the poet uses, and in which that thought is made to shine forth. The image is itself spiritual, contained within the current of the spirit's movements, and lifting the art which uses it as its plastic embodiment above any subservience to the outer sphere. The poet dwells in the world of images, these are already more or less generalized reproductions of the scene that environs humanity; these are the reeds in which the fire of thought is carried from nation to nation. His art therefore occupies a plane which has transformed the sensuous into the spiritual, which unfolds the beauty resident in mind alone.

Again each of the other arts has limits which it is perilous for it to overleap. The noblest of cathedrals can but suggest thought; sculptures reproduce the heroic and supreme individual; painting portrays that one moment of an action in which culminate all its elements, the union of its presuppositions and the beginning of the catastrophe; music works its wonders through the indirect medium of the emotions; but the poet has for his province the entire reach of life; there is nothing which it is not given him to express; movement, thought, the past, the to-come, picture, song, all are his to weave into his combinations, and to make of them what he intends. His art is thus an infinite one, and whatever limits it has, they are such as he freely sets and freely uses. As Matthew Arnold, comparing the poet with other artists, says:

> 'For ah! he has so much to do!
> Be painter and musician too!
> The aspect of the moment show,
> The feeling of the moment know!
> The aspect not, I grant, express,
> Clear as the painter's art can dress,
> The feeling not, I grant, explore,
> So deep as the musician's lore,—
> But clear as words can make revealing
> And deep as words can follow feeling.
> But ah! then comes his sorest spell
> Of toil! he must life's *movement* tell!
> The thread which binds it all in one,
> And not its separate parts alone!
> The movement he must tell of life,
> Its pain and pleasure, rest and strife!
> His eye must travel down at full,
> The long unpausing spectacle;
> With faithful unrelaxing force,
> Attend it from its primal source;
> From change to change and year to year,
> Attend it of its mid career,
> Attend it to the last repose,
> And solemn silence at its close.'

The imagination is a genuine meeting ground of all the powers which constitute the man. The sensuous world reappears there in much of its complexity and differenced life. The experiences of the poet need to be of the widest in order that this inner reproduction of the multiform world may be as rich in combinations and fertile in new growths as the exterior and real one. The wider the range of his excursions, the larger the realm

of images within him, the nobler will be the work which he is competent to do. But the imagination with its stores of figures and their relations is a free world. In the scene before the artist, the real scene out there, the mind of the perceiver must yield itself to the relations visible before it. The constructive process which builds up in the soul the mountain and stream and valley and sky is brought into the limits which nature has made, and must give itself up to them if it wishes to know them. There is here an element of constraint, an authoritativeness imposed upon the spirit from without, a temporary abnegation of freedom.

Not so with the region of the imagination and its sceneries and denizens. They are the creation of the free spirit and possess the attributes which belong to that freedom. They are particular events or times or places or persons, but they bear upon them the impress of the freedom which created them. As such, they are no longer mere creations standing side by side with other similar concretions in a realm of hard fact, but they are a fluctuant, moving life, through which freedom is reflected in every detail and change. They are freedom, so to speak, made sensible. They are what nature must be to the thought which created it, and which sees it as flowing forth from its free activity. If one ventured a bold flight, one might perhaps say that the science of the world and its poetry would ultimately coincide, that the great poem of the universe would be so wholly and truly reflected in the verse of the singer that the creative processes would appear in it as they indeed are.

In the imagination the universality and the particularity of man come to fruitful nuptials. It is like the enchanted island of the Tempest, nay, it is that enchanted island in which the voices of the spirit are heard everywhere, and the individual man becomes conscious of deeps upon deeps within him. Hence the imagination is the constant maker of symbols; Aristotle has called man the mimetic or symbol-making animal; I suppose he meant that he was the fashioner of images, which in their limitedness contained the widest significance, which were hints or indexes of myriad meanings behind and beyond them. Thus every figure built up by the imagination, however rich may be its special content, and however varied may be the relations in which it is placed, becomes a generalized representation of the problem or collision for which it stands or in which it is involved, becomes a symbol of activities which transcend time and space.

The whole art of the poet plays in this region of symbol. Through the gateway of words he leads us into its labyrinth, and if we wish to follow his wanderings we must give ourselves to that free creation of land and sea and men which is the condition and possibility of his labors. The unity of all these labors is to be found in the thought of freedom. Here is no heavy and intractable material to be hewn into abstract representations of personality, no deceptive canvas on which depth and soft-

ness are achieved, by a *tour de force* of the artist, no enswathement in a succession of emotions which are universality only in its immediacy, in its large consciousness of itself without the background of detail to make clear what in truth is. But everything is the production of free spirit, freedom is the living creator, and is seen to be the truth from which the all has come, and into which it returns.

But the imagination is not an individual possession and its creations are not the isolated things which belong to one man, and have their sole interest in the revelation which they make of the idiosyncrasies of a certain person having such and such a place in the world. Prevalent criticism seems to find its chief function in discovering those elements in works of art which show forth their purely phenomenal side, but it is more worthy of an intelligence itself the real presupposition of the world to discover relations to that intelligence. The imagination of the race is a whole, and the entire range of thought and emotion is contained in it. The world of beauty is the whole world so disclosed as to make its manifestation a harmony like unto itself, a shrine, a splendor, a glory, as Plato says, of the Self-moved One.

The thinking of the race has passed through its imaginative stage. It has only been after long and heavy labors that the power of thought has emerged into clearness, and gained command of its resources in their purity. The release from the domination of the image has only been made with difficulty, and the free use of the image in art has also been one of the long-deferred and late achievements. The imaginative thinking or rather the thinking through representations gave rise to the mythologies of the world, and they are the heroic efforts of mankind to recognize the fullness of its being through the medium of picture and symbol. With the advance into the height of pure thinking, the mythologies and wonder-tales remain a treasure-house of emblems in which the deepest aspirations, the noblest fore-illuminations, the highest intentions have so to speak concreted themselves. These are, therefore, not individual embodiments of the idea, whose translation might be a task of some difficulty to a person other than its maker, but the forms in which the race has told its own story to itself, a treasure house, as it were, into which all may go, and which all may own. It is here that the great artist finds his best material. One must not understand that this making of forms which shall serve as mediums for the transmission of the artistic thought has ever ceased. It is going on now as it has always been going on. We no longer make mythologies; that belonged to the youth of the race, as we have reached the soberer period of approaching maturity; but we constantly make tales which seize the general consciousness, and after a prolonged transformation are adapted to the need intended to be subserved by them. One has only to study the history of the Faust legend to see how it was hewn into shape by

generation after generation to become at last the vehicle for the greatest among the moderns; or watch the resurgence of the Niblung story into the consciousness of the time, weaving for itself a garment of supernatural melodies, which ear had before not heard.

This realm of world-images belongs to all artists, and from it painting and music and the rest take what belongs to them, for the whole of this realm belongs to each, and the new growths there may be plucked by whoever can bind them into new garlands. The one and the many are here supremely one in a life which includes both. The poet, however, is native here; he is the imagination which has evoked the land itself, and the source of its fertility. He is of imagination all compact; he does not, however, give merely to airy nothings a local habitation and a name; he gives color and light and a home to whatever is best and truest; his eye does not roll in a fine frenzy, but he works in a sad sincerity from which he has no desire to free himself because it is the very spirit in which all high work must be done.

The whole gold and bejewelled panoply in which poetry is clad, the interwoven blaze of metaphor and simile and allegory are only lighter efforts of the same creative power. About the figure or scene evoked by the poet plays the flickering light of a fancy which reproduces in lessening depth the idea, thus given an investiture which is in truth royal. The metaphor has a singular efficacy and charm; the trope by uniting in one image two widely differenced thoughts intimates a unity underlying both, and points to that unity which underlies all. The whole realm becomes thus as it were a marvellous world of echoes; each utterance brings with it a host of deeper connections, and a music is the effect which is the very song of the whole. The idea penetrates every smallest atom of the material used in the structure; what is so difficult to see in the vast concretions of nature becomes here plain and clear, and the visible and tangible float in the medium of a transfiguring thought.

The poet is therefore one of those great personalities in which the entire potency of the time reveals and completes itself. He belongs to those forces which enlarge the world as we know it, and give it an outlook further and beyond. The conditions for his appearance are manifold and they need all to be fulfilled if he is to do his work successfully. Singers we have always with us; they are greater or lesser insights, and lift the veil from a mystery here and there; they may recall us to a belief in many a high truth from whose allegiance we have been wandering, or awaken in us again feelings whose fire has been smouldering under a forgetfulness induced by an occupation with many affairs. These constitute always a reminder that the real has another deeper side, that life has a within as well as a without, that truth is more than appearance, that the dream is sometimes better than the thing.

These are poets, and they may have a genuine part in the play of eternity, small, it may be, but worthy; but the poet comes only at those intervals when the world sums itself in a great recognition of its whole life, spiritual and temporal, and he is, with others, his fellows and his peers, the eye that sees and the voice that tells the story in the way given to him. He is one of the ways in which man, the generic man, comes to an understanding of himself. His thought must therefore be the dominant influence of the age in which he flourishes; that age must be the organ of great and far-reaching purposes; in it must culminate many thought tendencies, and in it must arise the morning red of newer revelations. The progress of mankind has led up to him and he consummates that progress in his poem.

His relation to the world is therefore dual. Toward the past he occupies the position of a focus in which all rays converge; of the future he is the beginner. He stands side by side with the philosopher, the prophet, the wielder of affairs in the fashioning of the to come. The age of miracles is not to be relegated to some single epoch in history; it is the ever-present fact which meets us everywhere; a word, a song, a poem transforms as it always did the face of affairs, gives eye to the blind, feeds the great multitude, awakens the dead. It is just as true today as it ever was that no accent of the Holy Ghost is lost, however heedless may seem the generation hurling its way through the corridors of life. Shakespeare is the world's poet because the whole world is in him, and every man finds on that liberal stage himself, his neighbor, and all that belongs to them.

What poetry thus expresses is the deepest idea, and that idea in forms which it has made for itself. The whole art is transparent spirit throughout; some deep emotion, some large understanding, some refiguration of great actions assumes in it a garb which is only themselves freely externalized. There prevail therefore unity, relation, organization throughout; at the centre is a reconstitution of thought, and it develops itself in every member of the representation. These members may unfold into a completeness which is a relative independence, but their independence dwells in reality in their complete reflection of the central sentiment. In a great play every character is great; there is a fullness of individuality even in the so-called minor parts which make them the centre, often, of a play within the play. These independencies however unite in the general action which includes and permeates the whole.

The soul of poetry is in its creative idea; its body is the image and melody. Music like the other arts brings its tribute to this sovereign. Its pomp and charm accompany the march of the poetical eventualities. Rhythm, sonorousness, melody belong to the realm of enchantment. They are part of the robe which the art wears so royally. The appearance of rhyme, whether initial or final, alliteration or end-syllable, points again to the oneness which makes the poem; that oneness shows itself in these

extraneous details as the life of a tree in its slightest leaf. The dependence of rhythm upon the recurrence of accented syllables throws the identity of the poem up before the thought inasmuch as the significant syllable is ordinarily the accented one. The action reflects itself anew in the succession of syllables receiving the greater stress of the voice.

The prose romance shows the same free tendency in the use of its materials as the poem. The mediæval romances introduce the reader into a maze of commingled scenes and actions mingled. It is sometimes said that the demands of verse, especially in their elaborated and later forms, which bring into play all the resources of a complex and many keyed instrument, fetter the freedom of the poet, and the use of a less artificial medium would leave him with his eyes more surely fixed on his subject, and he would not be distracted by the need of fulfilling requirements apparently antagonistic and either one alone presenting great difficulties. It may be said that the true poet wears his shackles lightly, and finds in the form such a return of the thought of the poem upon itself as strengthens the inspiration.

The modern novel sprang from the romance by dropping out of its domain the marvellous element, and discovering in the daily and actual, elements of beauty and sublimity which had been once thought to belong solely to achievements mediated by gods or creatures possessing superhuman powers. The gods while remaining on high have yet been found eager to descend and dwell in the heart of man, and partake of his domestic cheer by the simple winter fireside. But the romance and the novel differ from the poem in their lack of unity; they penetrate into the infinite recesses of human hopes and aspirations, and bring thence rich freights of precious insights; they bind these together after all only in a more or less external fashion; they are essentially analytic; they deal with the parts; the poem is essentially one; it deals with the whole.

Poetry has followed in its various progresses the method of History; it has gone from an absorption in the objective world to a comprehension of a unity of the world within and the world without. In every nation its poetry begins with long narrative poems, and poetry shows again the passage from subservience to the external to a recognition of free internality as the source and end of all. The heroic age required indeed the efforts of giants and the constant interposition of supernatural powers to assure victory to the sore-beset and nascent manhood of the race. The labors of a Herakles or a Theseus were more than needed in the primitive conquest of nature and the upbuilding of institutions. They were the bearers of the idea of the world and their deeds were the salvation of mankind.

A distinction must be made between narrative poems, however elaborate and finished, and the true epic. The former are to be found in

indefinite number among all peoples of high culture, and among whom the arts belong to the graceful amenities of life. They are reflective representations of great periods, and have often a deep and real content, but the true epic belongs to the evolution of the race, and appears at the turning points of events. They are scattered down the ages, and their authors are the heroes of poetry. Their content is a great national enterprise which is at the same time a world enterprise; for the time the particular nation has concentrated in itself the hope that is looking forward to the next great event in the realization of the destiny of the race.

In the great epic poems the heavens are opened; the gods or God are part of the powers that bring forth the issue; in the artificial epic these appear only as a sort of convenient machinery which operates at uncertain although important junctures. In the real epic the temporal world is encircled by the eternal, the occurrences transpire in heaven, before they unroll themselves on earth. In the epic all events appear as belonging to a system which is under the direction and dominance of supernatural powers. The connection between the earth and what is above the earth is open and messengers descend and ascend on the skyey pathway to intermediate in the affairs of men.

But in this way the true life of man is placed outside of himself; after all he has no substantial ground in himself; what he is, and what he may become blazes up there in glorious effulgence, but it is yet external to himself. Great as are his deeds, heroic as is his character, unparallelled as is his bravery, they are all reflections of an activity nobler than his own, and dominating him without. A fatality after all overshadows the epic; a fatality of freedom, for the gods are free, but a fatality nevertheless. The gods must descend from their seats on high, and take up their abodes in the minds and hearts of men, building up there a freedom corresponsive to their own, abnegating themselves at any cost, and giving to the man an independence like unto their own. This freedom or subjectivity reveals itself in the lyric. Aspiration, longings, passion, revolt, find here their expression. The unrestraint of the soul revelling in its sense of superiority to all limits, or in its power to make its own limits, surges in outbursts of song. Caprice pours forth the delight in its own infinitude. The consciousness of the soul that it has within itself a region which is created by itself, that in opposition to the bondage which life perforce would have it submit itself unto, it holds the secret of a larger being, in which there is nothing that is not the result of its own action, throws itself into fierce and overflowing expression. The consciousness may display itself as negative to the established and the institutional, and place the demand for freedom in the boldest and most exaggerated aspect.

But the truest lyrics are not negative; the recognition in them is made of the unity of the individual soul of the world, and this theme is sung

in the most varied accents and under the color of the most diverse moods. The songs which spring up among the peoples, who shall say how, are expressive of the truest national life; no poet seems to be their author; the whole nation has given itself utterance in them. The religious longings, the deepest and most sincere, clothe themselves in the lyric garb. At great crises in history, the patriotism of the poet, which is also the general patriotism of the time, puts on its singing robes, and the melodies thus born have become a heritage noble, inspiring, priceless.

The cultivated lyric knows that the entirety of subjectivity is its province, and also that under cover of an individual mood, it holds a universal content. It recognizes itself as the mouthpiece, the instrument, of the pervasive emotion, and its special tone becomes part of the form which it uses. In a prosaic and scientific age, it may recall a halting generation back to those deeper apprehensions which are the genuine trend of life. The lyric revels in the utmost play with its material, devises new rhythmic modes with curious avidity, usurps the musician's privilege of the discovery of ever new and exquisite melodies. The epic moves on with its slow and stately tread or rushes like a cataract over its precipice, but remains within the rich possibilities of a single metric form; the lyric in its form is as differenced as its moods, and obeys only that inner law of harmony without which a poem would cease to be a poem.

In the drama the subjective and the objective confront each other and proceed to their reconciliation. The drama must have a thoroughly wrought out plot like the epic, but each character appears in it charged with an internality that seeks to impose itself on the others. There ought to be no *deus ex machina* who is to appear on the scene of action when the knot requires loosening. If the gods appear, they are themselves a part of a purpose, which is no doubt, themselves, but which they do not seek to impose on the antagonists. If destiny or fate still hovers in the background, the drama has not yet fully emancipated itself from the domination of earlier poetry; it still has an epical tendency from which it will ultimately purify itself.

The drama appears invariably to have arisen in connection with religious ceremonies and in its earlier forms to have partaken of their solemnity. The great heroes of the national mythologies have been the figures most frequently standing forth in the earlier plays, and too have been the representatives of great principles for which the sacrifice of life was freely given. The collision portrayed was between two views of life, each asserting its infinitude, and consequent absolute justification, and leading in the denouement to the supremacy of the higher. Character appeared majectic, grand, somewhat generalized. Gradually a secularization, so to speak, takes place; the characters lose somewhat of their remoteness, and become more akin to those we meet in our daily life; they develop a deeper

inwardness and a more pronounced individuality; they are more themselves and less the mere carriers of ideas which include far more than themselves.

In comedy is found, of course, a collision which in one sense is no collision; at least in the end it shows itself to have been based on an illusion, which, being removed, all things fall into their places and harmony is restored; or it contrasts two world-views, the inadequacy of both or one of which is displayed in the various contradictions and follies to which it leads. The illusion which it portrays may indeed be a very profound one, and the action may verge on the delineation of discords that approach the tragic, but the clearing up at the end shows that the trials and worriments have indeed been much ado about nothing, or a taking of things as one likes them rather than as they are. The mistake of the individual or the nation in taking that for reality which is not so, needs the laughter of the comic portrayal, or the fierce mirth of the satirist to dissipate its fumes and restore the atmosphere into those clearer conditions wherein the sight may behold the object as it is.

But the collision of fundamental principles both of which must be held if the whole truth is to be discovered or acted forth on the stage prepared for it demands something deeper for its solution; the clearer these verities are seen, the profounder becomes the allegiance to them and the more imperative the call for the supreme sacrifice; if no mediation can be found for them, if no higher and more organic verity continent of them both can be discovered, if they are seen simply in the relation of higher and lower, the bearer of the lesser thought perishes in the establishment of the higher. Or the subjectivity of the individual may place him in antagonism with the movement of things around him, with that tendency in the world which may be called its necessary movement; if he cannot adjust himself thereto, if he remains irreconcilably outside of what is essential, his disappearance from the scene of action cannot but ensue.

But the meaning of the modern world is mediation; more and more we are learning that there are no irreconcilable contradictions; that opposition itself is only a means by which a fuller development is attained; these oppositions are real, and their force and extent must not be diminished by any easy and light-hearted attempts to make them synonymous with the illusory; life is not a light-hearted comedy, but it assuredly is not a tragedy. The Drama which recognizes the depth and validity of moral antagonisms, which will not miminize the distinction between the life natural and the life spiritual, which knows the intensity of the conflict and comes to its triumph with the marks of the struggle upon it, but which yet holds above the fiercest of the peril the illumination of a unifying idea, and which in the end brings both antagonists safe and ennobled into a wider life than they knew before, is the work of the modern world. Tragedy belongs to the past; and ever since the thirteenth century life has been a profound

and divine comedy whose termination while in the beatific vision has yet a phenomenal existence in all the realms of the world where work is to be done for our fellows.

The poetic realm is the unfolding of man in his completeness; his highest aims, his noblest aspirations, his deepest thoughts, his conflicts, his victories, are all there; nature in all her splendor is there, her loveliest landscapes, her most suggestive scenes. There is nothing in the soul of man which has not received an irradiation from the poetic setting given it by the one who felt it most deeply and knew it most adequately. But the poet looks beyond the visible and the temporal; he looks beyond even the very highest of thought and emotion that have been reached in his age; he has ever been called a prophet or seer, and he may in truth be said to occupy so high a situation; he perceives the light from below the horizon; he forecasts the events, the realizations that are to be. His home is in the Idea of the world, and he is the messenger of its next great incarnation. He sums up what has been, and relates what is to be; he is the legislator of the future.

The world of the poet is the ideal world, but that is only to say that it is the real world. He delineates not so much what is, as what ought to be; if one cannot find in the outer what he depicts, it is only because the outer with all its mighty effort and strain does not quite reach what it strives for. In this region of the imagination the unachieved is done, the height climbed which appeared so difficult, the contradiction solved which wore so forbidding a face. The poetic life, which he who reads and understands, must make his own is in that complete Idea of the Whole which is its true being, which underlies and controls it, which shapes all being and thought to its own high standard, and brings everything with which it deals into conformity with the perfect, its truth and essence.

The beauty with which the poet is ravished is thus no particular beauty, it is the beauty of the all, it is that glory which the absolute wears as its fit and perfect expression, which while a robe, yet is itself throughout a life, and so reflects the infinite truth as to be completely one with it. As Diotima said to Socrates: "But what if man had eyes to see the true beauty—the divine beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality, and all the colors and vanities of human life—thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty, divine and simple, and bringing into being and educating true creations of virtue and not idols only? Do you not see that in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities; for he has hold not of an image but a reality, and bringing forth and educating true virtue to become the friend of God, and be immortal, if mortal man may? Would that be an ignoble life?"

The poet is the great namer; his appellatives are permanent; where scientist and philosopher grope, he is at once at the goal; when the other work of time in which he has appeared is obsolete and dead, his verses are fresh as the morning and as joyous as the spring. The science of Greece is a mere shadow; even her philosophies have been merged in greater and fuller thought; but Homer and Aeschylus can never lose their strength and splendor, and Emerson says of the poet that he is:

'A brother of the world, his song
Sounded like a tempest strong
Which tore from oaks their branches broad,
And stars from the ecliptic road.
Time wore he as his clothing-weeds
He sowed the sun and stars for seeds.'

THE CHARACTERS OF OTHELLO AND IAGO

By Katherine G. Blake

TWO marked characters stand out in the Play before us for discussion: those of Othello and Iago. The first is by some critics esteemed the greatest character ever drawn by our dramatist. I propose to follow out the development of those two men: both of whom are supremely interesting. The one a man of simplicity, depth and nobility of character: the other a very devil from the pit. Iago's hatred of Othello is raised to white heat by so trifling a circumstance, as his disappointment in failing to get a good position on Othello's staff; Cassio has the post he coveted, while Iago is only made the great soldier's ancient or ensign.—Iago is proud of his own meanness; many are proud of their virtues, and defeat the moral beauty of their actions by their self-conscious ness, their boastfulness; but few, it is to be hoped, delight in the slough of their own vileness. Listen to Iago:

'In following him, I follow but myself. Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty, But seeming so, for my peculiar end. . . . I am not, what I am.' Does an incarnate devil speak these words? Or is this a man? Now we watch his cunning, when Roderigo goes to awaken Brabantio to the fact that his daughter is not under his roof. Iago quickly

slips off to rejoin his detested master.—'Tho' I do hate him as I do hell pains, Yet for necessity of present life, I must show out a flag and sign of love.' With these words he hies him away to Othello! In the second scene we find him with his master, and the interest heightens. There is something which appeals to a strange intellectual sense of delight, in the study of this consummate scoundrel; he is the apotheosis of villainy:

> 'Tho' in the trade of war I have slain men,
> Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience,
> To do no contrived murder; I lack iniquity
> Sometimes to do me service.'

He sighs as it were with admiration of his own tender piety! It would be interesting to know if the great modern delineator of human hearts, Charles Dickens, had studied Iago; it would seem as if Dickens had brooded upon Iago, while he evolved his serpent-like Uriah Heap! Next comes the foul aspersion of Othello by his father-in-law. What more insulting accusation could a man make, than did Brabantio in asserting that the Moor had used magic to draw the love of 'the gentle Desdemona.' We observe the composed dignity with which he faces this foul aspersion. A lesser man must have met it with a blaze of temper; not so Othello. A large nature is usually composed under the wasp-sting of small minds. We follow them to the Council Chamber whither the Moor goes to obey the call of the Duke; and the maddened Brabantio to lay his charge against Othello before the assembled Council. The possibility of using witchcraft or magic was, as we all know, absolutely believed in the seventeenth century, hence there would be nothing inherently absurd in Brabantio's assertion. It seems both from Othello's and Iago's remarks that the Moor was much his wife's senior; but this was of course not the chief difficulty in Brabantio's mind, he says: 'and the spite of nature, of years, of country, credit, everything;' observe that word, everything:—Brabantio's agony of passion is such, that words fail him. and he uses a vague generality, as intemperate, unbalanced people often do, when they have no stable grounds for their inflamed assertions. As Brabantio waxes hotter, the Duke becomes more judicial, and with the balanced dignity of the legal mind, he requests proofs, something stronger than these.'

'Their habits and poor likelihood of modern seeming.' In a word he implies that Brabantio's tirade is insignificant and trifling. 'To vouch this is no proof', he quietly remarks. Meanwhile Othello stands in silent dignity under Brabantio's brutal insults, he delivers his 'round unvarnished tale' when pressed for it. He is so strong in straight-forwardness, so simple-minded, so direct. Can any plausible explanation be given for so strange

a thing as Desdemona's adoration of her husband, which broke the tender bondage of home life and turned the gentle, pliant girl from her father whom she calls 'the lord of duty,' to the middle-aged, rough soldier! It has been said Othello was so strong; and most certainly women are attracted by strength, be it physical, or intellectual, or moral force. May it not be asserted that in this simple soldier, were combined all three? And thus a hero is revealed. Even so we have not bared the roots of this difficulty. This extraordinary attraction of love, or of friendship, what is it? What mortal has fathomed these mysteries? Othello says: 'She loved me for the dangers I had passed.' 'And I loved her that she did pity them.' Here we touch the ground floor of metaphysics. Then was it pity only, which drew the gentle maiden to Othello, or was it alone his courage which she deified? No, no, a thousand times no! 'Pitv is akin to love,' we all know the trite phrase, but does this cover the ground? If so to what a paradox we are led. We soon touch the brick wall of absurdity. Any male mortal suffers distressful circumstances, and at once all the sympathetically minded single women, to say no hint of the others, are on their knees to him! Can bathos go farther? We must leave unravelled this riddle of what governs the magnetic attractions of human beings. These things are among the mysteries which make up life; which form its heights, and its depths, its joys, and its sorrows, its beauty and sometimes its terrors. Before them we can but bow reverently, we can only touch the hem of the garment which veils 'the open secret.' Is this mysticism? Do some say, 'What nonsense is this talk of mystery, and reverence, and what not? Let us tread reasonably the highway of common sense and away with such flights!' Be it so, then let us turn our backs on all that signifies life and makes it so exquisitely, so marvelously beautiful. The mountain tops, and the depths of the valleys are not for us,—there walk Poetry, and her sister Religion; and what is left for us who hold by the practical highways? We have food and drink and clothes and money making; truly we have it all;—the husks of life.

'Getting and spending we lay waste our powers.' But to lay irony aside, and to return to Othello and Brabantio, the Duke and the Senators, where in the Council Chamber they await the dissecting knife of our criticism. Strained as is the scene, where palpitating with passion, an injured father defends his pride and love, and calls for vengeance on his enemy; nevertheless tragedy turns her face from us, and comedy peeps round the corner, when Desdemona rounds on the miserable Brabantio, with her incisive unanswerable argument.—

> 'I am hitherto your daughter; but here's my husband,
> And so much duty as my mother show'd
> To you, preferring you before her father,
> So much I challenge that I may profess,
> Due to the Moor, my lord.'

And the unhappy, defeated father cries, 'God be with you! I have done, I have done, my lord.'

Our pity for Othello is raised before we reach the end of this scene of his and Desdemona's opening fortunes. How great he is in his noble, simple trustfulness. He has gained his point, he has permission for his wife to go to the scene of war, and he leaves her with whole-hearted confidence, in the hands of that specious scoundrel Iago. Yet one other word of the Council Chamber scene must be said. Who is it who first sows the seeds of hideous jealousy in this single-minded man? Not Iago, not Roderigo; who, but the revengeful father Brabantio!

> 'Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see;
> She has deceived her father, and may thee.'

In these few pregnant words Brabantio in his selfishness has sown the wind, and will of necessity reap the whirlwind! Othello must have had great opportunities of knowing men, yet how strangely blind he proves himself; again and again he turns to 'honest Iago.' Certainly so devilish a character as this clever plotter possessed, must have been apparent in his face. True he is but twenty-eight, hence his odious passion of jealousy and envy have not had the years in which to carve their lines upon his features; yet cunning must have been marked and the absence of openness of nobility, even though thirty years had not passed over him.

For as surely as the Atlantic rollers mark their titanic forces on the western coast of England, so inevitably does the vivid inner life of the human being, lay day by day, its semblance on the countenance; forming sometimes by middle-age, what is justly called, such an interesting face; or on the contrary, the hard, discontented lines of the self-centred, unsympathetic character; and all lies as an open book for him who is possessed of perception; there it is, in the train, the tram-car, aye, even as we hurry past it in the street, and receive either its shadow, or its illumination.—It is needless to comment on the cleverness of Iago's plot, so craftily woven, so ably carried out, and necessarily followed by its consummation of hideous tragedy! Incidentally this man reveals to us some of the tender beauty of Desdemona's character. She undoubtedly takes a high place among those who inhabit Shakespeare's Gallery of fair women. We listen to Iago's counsel to the stricken Cassio, a man who, standing high in self-respect, is broken down to the brink of despair by the loss of his reputation. *Iago*: 'Confess yourself freely to her; importune her help to put you in your place again: she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested!' How lovely, how divine is the womanhood that is here sketched. Sketched too by the hand of a bad man. Hence how visible

must have been Desdemona's angelic disposition that it should impress such an observer. It calls to mind another and entirely perfect description of woman, drawn by him 'who uttered nothing base,' whose voice was a trumpet-call to the young manhood of a century past.

> 'A being breathing thoughtful breath,
> A traveller betwixt life and death;
> The reason firm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength and skill,
> A perfect woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, and command;
> And yet a spirit still, and bright,
> With something of an angel light.'—

Iago could appreciate Desdemona's blessed disposition, yet such was the distorted blackness of his own, that he did not hesitate to blast so fair a life. There are, we thankfully know such tender beings who hold it a 'vice in their goodness' not to do more than they are requested. Such lives touch the circle of our own, and we are blest. We reverence their radiant goodness, and receive an inspiration. By so much as Desdemona is near perfection, by so much more is Iago beneath the pale of manhood. For what is the nature of the man who could tarnish so fair a fame? And what is the root from which his seething hatred has grown? What but envy? And what is envy, but another facet of the detestable selfishness called jealousy? Iago envies Othello his position, likewise he envies Cassio his: further he has a slight suspicion of the attitude in which Othello has stood to his own wife Emilia. A suspicion so faint that he does not even care to substantiate it. Had the man used his keen intellect nobly, he should have become a skillful Ambassador, a noted Statesman, a leader of men! But the Iagos of humanity, turn their backs on the sunshine of life, with Milton's magnificent creation, they say 'Evil, be thou my good'; they build up the black shadows which haunt them, they walk readily into the hell of their own creation. We overhear with an interest akin to pain, the trustful words of that good fellow Cassio in his interview with Desdemona, and her cordial assurance of help. This woman is not clever, she is not intellectual, she is even something of a moral coward,, for she deceives when in awkward or alarming situations; and this arises from her sensitive highly nervous nature; but she is, as it were compact of love; a love that flows out on every being she meets. Such women are they who command the reverend worship of most men. We see how ready she is with her vow of friendship to Cassio which she will 'perform to the last article'; partly because he is a fellow-creature, and therefore one whom she rejoices to serve, but mainly because, he loves her adored Othello. All our chief char-

acters are blind as regards Iago; he must have possessed that rare gift, charm of manners. Othello by no means stands alone in trusting his ancient. Cassio says: 'I never knew a Florentine more kind and honest!' If anyone should know a man's nature, surely that one should be his own wife, yet Emilia says: 'I warrant it grieves my husband As if the case were his.'

And the trusting Desdemona replies: 'O, that's an honest fellow.' The scene that next ensues between her and Othello is exquisite in its tenderness. And that again between the Moor and Iago, when his suspicions are first raised, is a marvel of intricacy, of Macchiavellian ability, which must be closely studied to be appreciated. Surely here is one of Shakspere's highest flights of genius. The strong, simple, confiding nature of Othello, played on so skillfully by his base torturer, who plants a jealousy in him which *did not exist previously!* How pathetic it is to watch the efforts of this agonized soul to suppress and hide its growing torment. The poison works swiftly, we can even watch the deterioration of this noble character. He bids Iago to observe Desdemona, to play the detective. Are we assisting as spectators in the Court at a vulgar case, which appears in the newspapers? The scene draws to its desired close. Iago personates humility, distrust of his own suspicions, thereby clinching Othello's.

> 'Let me be thought too busy in my fears
> As worthy cause I have to fear I am.'

Hence he leaves his chief with the impression of his exceeding honesty and of his great knowledge of human dealings. As are all noble, simple natures, Othello is humble-minded, self-distrustful; while at the same time, he is confident in his self control. 'Fear not my government,' he cries. A perilous condition this, and one certain to lead under such strain from within, and pressure from without, to a terrible outbreak. Desdemona enters to her husband, who is alone and in anguish; in a moment his better self is in the ascendent; the demons which tear him, turn their backs: 'If she be false,' he murmurs, 'O then heaven mocks itself. I'll not believe it.' Her innocence speaks and he, not yet quite mad, can hear, can perceive; but for the moment only, while the aroma of her pure presence lasts: then the demons resume their sway; the passion of the drama deepens, the dark tragedy closes down, and we echo the words of this most miserable man, 'The pity of it, Iago, O Iago.' If Desdemona be not intellectual, love has sharpened her perception, and with exquisite insight into the masculine nature, she accounts for, and excuses the change in her beloved one, reminding herself how absurd it would be to expect a lover's homage from her busy husband, a man immersed in state affairs. Did she expect the perfection, the powers of a god? She

puts this as so absolutely absurd to her attendant; but Emilia has a keen, woman's wit, her perceptions too are quickened, probably by her love for her sweet mistress, and she lays her finger on the true solution of the enigma, jealousy. But no cause exists, and we mark the depth, the amazing truth contained in Emilia's reply. 'But jealous souls will not be answered so; They are not ever jealous for the cause, But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster, Begot on itself, born on itself.' How hideous, for it is truth.—

It is with heavy heart, we pursue the development of Iago's too successful plot. When Desdemona's bewildered sorrow touches despair, the full beauty of her nature blossoms. She is absolutely in the dark as to the cause of her husband's ghastly accusations, so pure a nature cannot conceive of the reality; but Emilia's coarse knowledge of the world's worst side enables her again to reveal the truth; a slanderer, she storms out, and Iago, this genius among actors, retorts, 'There is no such man, it is impossible!' We listen with hushed breath to the reply of the perfected saint Desdemona, 'If any such there be, heaven pardon him.' And lastly as one transformed into one pure flame of love she murmurs:

> 'Unkindness may do much;
> And his unkindness may defeat my life,
> But never taint my love.'

No never, in good truth; a man may be unfaithful, drunken, dishonest, may even strike his wife; yet, will she hold to him, in exquisite fulfilment of her marriage vow. And such is the picture of true woman, which every one in any way worthy the name will stamp as absolute truth. Such is woman at her highest, drawn for us, revealed to us, by a man. Men often with self-satisfied cynicism, remark 'They don't understand women!' Be it so, they do not, but Shakspere did; and in this marvelous power perhaps it may be asserted, lies his highest claim to the position of the mightiest poet this world has ever known. A whole paper might be written on the conversation between Desdemona and Emilia, that last, piteous conversation, in which in the great intimacy of dual solitude, they reveal their depths to each other; alas, for the depth of Emilia's philosophy; alas, for its marvelous truth. One last gleam from that heaven of beauty, a pure woman's heart; we listen to Desdemona's exquisite gentle reply, 'Heaven me such uses send. Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend.' The play does not offer to us alone its tremendous lesson to avoid the stupid sin of jealousy; be it in the mighty passion of love, be it in the strong bonds of friendship. This monster 'begot on itself, born on itself,' transforms into poison the wine of the purest joy of life. Another lesson far more closely enwrapped is contained in its evolution of character.

Iago, a merry spirit, a young man of but eight and twenty, has killed his soul, for during all the brief tale of his years, he has preferred ugliness rather than beauty. For him no man is noble, no woman is pure. He has fixed his observation upon the negatives of life, rather than upon its affirmatives. He searches amid the spring of conduct for mean motives, and assuredly he finds them; such a search invariably commands success. His depths are covered in slime, in the magnificent metaphor of scripture, for him 'the light is as darkness.'

Terrible as is the tragedy of this play, evil does not altogether triumph. Desdemona expires with an exquisite lie upon her lips, which assuredly the recording angel speedily wafted to its fitting place. Othello's confidence and love are fully revived. In their deaths their union is complete. Our faith that Goodness reigns is restored. Virtue again raises her beautiful face, while Vice sinks dying into the dust, and amid ashes of its own fires.

RISTORI IN AMERICA

By Thomas Dickinson

THE death of Ristori comes perhaps with less of a shock of loss than with one of reminder that there has persisted for long in our latter days a life that belonged to the heroic antiquity of the drama. In many essential respects our ways are far removed from those of the fifties, and in no regard is our alienation from the past more apparent than in dramatic art.

To the newly-risen generation of Americans the name of Ristori is but a name whispered in libraries or conned in the reminiscences of their fathers; but to the elder generation her name is a memory and a force. By its members will not soon be forgotten the stimulating influence of those first appearances in the French Theatre, now just forty years ago. Ristori made her American *debut* September 20, 1866, in Legouvé's *Medea*. She remained in America until the following spring, playing such plays as Schiller's *Mary Stuart*, Giacometti's *Elizabeth and Judith*, the *Phaedra* of Racine, Scribe's *Adrienne Lecouvreur* and the *Pia de' Tolamei* of Carlo Marenco. The following year she returned to this country and then introduced the *Marie Antoinette* of Giacometti, Silvio Pellico's *Francesca da Rimini*, Alfieri's *Myrrha* and Bellini's *Norma*. In later tours she played in *Lady Macbeth* and *Lucrezia Borgia* in addition to these.

At the time of her first appearance in New York, Ristori was about forty-five years of age. Her artistic primacy had been sealed in all the countries of Europe. She came to America with an assurance beyond that with which she had entered any other foreign land; death and a fickle public had conspired to end in her favor the feud with Rachel, and everywhere she was hailed as the incomparable tragedienne.

Yet, cordial as was her greeting at the French Theatre, it was not one of unmixed enthusiasm. A face in youth of singular beauty had even at this time received the signature of the mimetic tragedy with which she made her life. The reviews of the first performances show that while many accorded her action the highest praise, others left the theatre oppressed by a consciousness that something that had been desired was wanting. Granting to her perfection of bearing and gesture and elocution, certain critics still denied to her the mastery of force. To some she appeared cold, to others too intellectual, and others held that native fire had escaped in her pursuit of technic.

The disappointment that was felt in some portions of the American critical public was not peculiar to America. The artist had met it in France and England, and the critics of her own Turin complained that she put them to sleep. In the case of the former localities, the criticism may have arisen from the audiences' familiarity with the Rachel school of acting. Turin was frankly ungracious, and America was perhaps untutored.

Before one attempts to make judgment on a piece of art, it is well to be acquainted with the artist's desiderata. When an American critic complained that Ristori was perfectly equipped but lacked sufficient inspiration to carry her heavy parts, he neglected to consider the subtly evolved set of artistic regulations the artist had set for her guidance. Acting is an older art in Italy than it is in the United States, and Ristori was endeavoring further to attenuate the already very delicate artistic criteria of her native land.

To the American, acting was, and is, almost entirely an objectif ing of the emotions by means of the voice. But as a true Italian, Adelaide Ristori had enough of the heritage of the Greeks to believe in the expressive power of action as well as elocution, and physical attitude as well as vocal modulation. She tells us, in her autobiography, that she desired to unite the national spontaneity of the Italians with Greek plasticity. Mary Anderson bears witness that she studied statues and feminine drapery, and knew the "language of every line and fold." And Charlotte Cushman speaks admiringly of her free, untrammelled, graceful attitudes, and exclaims, "Such perfect nature, such ease, such grace, such elegance of manner, such as befits a queen."

As *poseuses*, there could be no choice between Ristori and Rachel. The great pupil of Sanson surrendered the palm to no one for physical grace. But in respect of the symbolic treatment of emotion, history does not hesitate in making Ristori its favorite. And here we come to those time-worn terms, the *natural* and the *conventional* in acting, with the limitations and obscurities of each. Naturalism is good within certain limits, but when these limits are over-passed naturalism is not good. So-called conventionalism is good also in its place. Italy, the home of the natural school of acting, made the young Ristori a naturalist. Her own artistic sense taught her how far she could imitate nature and get beauty, how far she could study facts and get truth. She was never so much a naturalist that she forgot the imperious claims of beauty in her art. And because she knew the limitations of naturalism she was called in England and America a conventionalist.

The artistic limitations of the natural school of acting appear most strongly in that form of drama which Ristori espoused. In comedy there is little danger of naturalism overstepping the line. But in high tragedy this danger is imminent, and all the more insidious for the fact that a passion torn to tatters will always tickle the ears of the groundlings.

Ristori brought to her *Myrrha* and *Phaedra* a symbolism, if we may so call it, that served infinitely to soften and beautify passions which in naturalistic presentation would have been monstrous. But apart from chastening unbeautiful emotions, Ristori had another object in view. She feared that in the uncontrolled expression of a dominant emotion some of the subtler currents of feeling that cross and recross through it, enveloped in it yet independent and vagrant, would be lost. Rachel had brought to her parts fire and energy, even passion and frenzy. How much danger is there that actor and audience, borne away on a compelling tide of feeling, will miss the deeper and truer meaning that underlies the turgid surface. In a problem of incest, such as is presented in *Myrrha*, there are finer filaments of thought and feeling entangled with the energetic passion of the ill-fated daughter that would be quite obscured were the passion alone emphasized. Besides the one awful passion, there are baby innocencies, girlish whimsies, and a real womanly chasteness to be revealed.

This leads to the most significant defense of Ristori's work. She always chose the harder part. In art we may express what is seen first: that is primitive and superficial. The great artist expresses what he sees with second sight, the tints that stimulate only the cultivated sense. So Ristori was never satisfied merely to feel her way into a character. To her, the character was revealed by the power of intellect. Of Rachel, Madame Waldor said, "That little girl has received of heaven a great gift, but with

it she has neither heart nor brains." Of Ristori this could not have been spoken. Throughout her autobiography, she lays great emphasis on her psychological analysis of the parts she played. She was particularly careful to achieve correctness in all matters of archæological detail. She got the great artist Ary Scheffer to design her mantle in Medea. On her first appearance in this country, the papers noticed with particular surprise the nice attention her company paid to court and stage etiquette. These things are significant as showing the ends she kept ever before her art, an art that was never satisfied with sound and fury, however thrilling these might be.

Though she was well able to carry her audience uncomprehending before the flood of her feeling, Ristori took greatest satisfaction in parts that did not strangle the intellect. She objected heartily to the use of such terms as *energy*, *force*, *violence*, in connection with the character of Francesca da Rimini: in short, she saw something better in the part. Wherever possible, she let the softer side of her nature speak in interpreting a character. In America she was criticised because, when representing Judith in the tent of Holofernes, she relied on her woman's tact to save her rather than her majesty of soul and the strength of her divine calling. But when you compare the two methods, how full of delicate possibilities is the one; how hackneyed is the other! The merest tyro would thrill at the opportunity to dominate a situation by extra-human power. Again, in the play of *Mary Stuart* she refused the adventitious support of majesty and wrung pity from the heart by playing a woman-martyr.

An American critic tells us that in Ristori's Medea there was seen an "adorable fury." Of that effect she would have been proud, but never of uncontrollable frenzy. It is said she refused to play the part of Medea until Legouvé composed a version of the play in which mother-love is not poisoned by jealous passion. "My woes come from the gods," says Medea. From the moment she appears at Corinth, in the fourth scene of the first act, leading her children by the hand, until the pitiful end of the play, the Medea of Ristori is more woman than fury. The actress plays upon every key of the woman soul. Nothing more tender has been seen on the American stage than her abject pleading with her children that they desert Creusa and return to the mother bosom. Only as she stands, bloody dagger in hand, at the base of the statue of Saturn, and answers Jason's thunderstruck "Who killed them?" with an explosive "Thou!" does she seem touched by the divine wrath of the Eumenides.

IN ASOLO

By Lucy S. Conant

ONE day I heard a new sound in Asolo, where we had climbed on a pious, long-deferred pilgrimage.

'What is that!' said I, leaning over a worn Dutch-door (in Italy!), fastened with mediaevally welded iron bolt across a rusty, curved iron balcony.

The plain of Veneto lay wide and green far below all the bright young vine leaves, woven outside the window. Euganeans, Berici, foot-hills, knee-hills,— all broke the rich carpet or climbed from it, but close at hand from a one-eyed tower, issued a grunting and a creaking. I closed my eyes, still clinging to the Dutch-door, and the sound was like that the miller makes when he grinds the corn in the water-lands; but where was the wind song in the sails?

'It's the *polenta*, grinding, for the *contadini*,' answered the *padrona*. 'Did Herself desire a *frittata* for the *cena*?'

'*Gia!*' cried I, hungrily, bobbing into a fresh dark room with its clean tiled floor, chairs with native-woven seats of delightful pattern, broad green bell-pull above the beds, and Robert Browning himself on the wall. 'And may we not have a *frittura* as well?'

I am devoted to a good *fritta mista*, if the oil be right, and the vegetables fresh, but I can never remember, though Donna Nina has toiled and toiled over me, whether such be *frittura* or a *frittata*. If I order the one, I am sure to receive a golden omelette (possibly stuffed with artichokes) when my mind is dwelling on globular visions of cauliflower and artichokes, neatly disguised in brown batter. And yet, if I think I am demanding the omelette, in comes a fry! Therefore, it has become a deal simpler to command both and thereby compliment Mistress Nina's cookery as well.

'There are squash-flowers today — *fiori*,' she announced proudly, as we went down winding stone stairs, past the *sala* with its old carved German chests and cupboards of linen, its bright flowers in the clustered windows over the street, and the bellied jar of golden brown that hinted of Faenza, and looked its age.

I leaned by the dresser in the dark old kitchen. Nina proudly opened the lid of her market basket. Above the gleam of green peas lay a light glorious layer of golden fragile trumpet-shaped squash blossoms and the

pale green calyx which would be cleft from its bright flower and cooked as a separate delicacy.

'And what else have you for the fry?'

'The *zucchetti*, signora, and the flowers, and hearts of the artichoke, its tips too old at present.'

'*Poi* — the peas — superb! But, Nina, can't you cook us something else purely Italian? Think now — something special?'

Nina's firm-cut North Italian face fell, then it brightened as she suggested — 'A nice bit of veal, on the spit!'

I laughed. 'Well, for today only.'

Margherita was already blowing twigs and blaze together on the raised stone platform of the hearth, built away from the wall, a foot high at least; spit, crane, chains and hooks, and enormous steel and brass fire dogs adorning it beneath a vast hood, opening, funnel-shaped, into the chimney. One could move around this hearth, gallop about it if a small boy, cook from any side of it. It was built in the room, upon the floor. Against the nearest curving wall swept an ingle seat where a dozen peasants might sit in the winter, feet on cosy hearthstone, and doze over the apples at their sputtering, watching spiced wine mellow by the logs. And close at hand were cinnamon, clove and nutmeg for the brew.

It's miles beyond up into Tyrol or even the Italian Dolomites where the same style of building prevails. You must stop on in the train until after Feltre and drop off at Sedico if you are to take a crazy omnibus (but better a carriage from Bellmio), up the narrow gulf of the Canale d'Agordo where the 'mountain cavalry' descended on the Austrians in 1848. Italy, through her least *contadini*, strove mightily still to be free, and having there but the stones of *bergfall*, usd them well. There, in huddled, smoke-blackened mountain towns, wherever fire has spared the old dwellings with their piled wooden balconies, artistic woodpiles and wooden roofs, you will find the same sort of projecting bay above the chimney, with two windows giving light to those knitting or working in this curious ingle — the *rotondo*. It may even be applied high up on a house wall, clinging like a bat below the outside chimney. Or in bright Cadore far up and up the lumber-crowded Piave river, you will find it where the dark wood of settles and low tables is polished, and the great hearth is washed each day or two, and three legged *bronzini* hang by ancient brass and copper on the sooty wall. And here on the very first step of the great Alps, in little peaked water-washed Asolo, rise already the sheltered fire altars of the North where both light and warmth may cheer homekeepers. Evening after evening now through the pleasant town, we could see the bright spark

and hear the crackle as thorn and furze were lit for evening meal, and when at home, could hear the warning bell of the spit as its little clockwork ran down, sending attentive Nina on a run to rewind and then baste drippingly.

We passed out, no other entrance or exit, through the common eating and drinking room, the great hearth rising in its dark depths like a shrine — though good Saint Anthony of Padua town had his own on the wall and a wick aglow beneath it, for it was his week of praise,— and the good brown men rose from their mugs with a '*Servo sua!*' All about were rows of silver pewter below old coppers. The dresser was fine with Roman lamps and tall brass candlesticks. The artist who decorated Asolo's theatre some fifty years ago (built in the great old tower) and there painted Queen Catherine as well, did here to the life certain Asolan types of that day, one, then a lass, now a crone, still living. After dinner, each day was touched off a portrait on the wall, he of the high old beaver, she of the coils and demure down gaze; and here they stare today, each new plasterer having spared all outlines, until the result is a sort of gentle intaglio!

Marietta came in for a glass of dark red wine, her baby on her arm. Shyly stood, until we praised it well. Then she hugged it tight, asking over and over, '*Quanto mi gusta ben? Quanto?*' '*Quaranta,*' whispered baby in a wee voice, hiding its head in her neck, already taught to say how many bagsful it loved her. King's daughter, in Northern-folk-tale, how much did you love your father? Baby made us her farewell prettily — *pulita* — as they say. We lifted the striped cotton curtain and found the first waves of market outside. This busy Saturday-tide pushed meek unharnessed donkeys into corner behind light carioles where they stood looking mournfuly out, zebraed, pathetic, constantly entreating. It swept past Pippa's old silk mill, now a lovely spot of peaceful work, past piles of dry chestnut leaves from which rose mighty cluckings and quackings as inmates' bills or beaks moved fantically, hurried along groups of women, kerchiefed brightly, ruddy, robust, and broke in excitement — full tide — in the lower piazza, where motley and medley mingled garish in the sun.

O Robert Browning, did you not find color and types in this little spot? Queen Catherine's tower (though it was standing when she first rode up the hill way, welcomed and cheered) dominated the painted battle wall of Municipio, rich shadows in arcade, the church loggia. The usual great umbrellas rose above the ordinary booth displays of cotton lace, intricate safety razors, suspenders, kerchiefs of green orange and vermillion, sashes, socks and looking glasses, Virgins, and colored prints of Garda and the Dolomites, the new Heir, or a galaxy of Europe's Queens. Bright faced women, stalwart young farmers, filled the piazza. Among them moved

bleared and bent strange figures, degraded, reminiscent of Callot's clumping shapes in their pendant rags and knobbed canes — here a banded eye, there a sinister leer. Gobbo, in a homespun green linen coat, ran lightly through the crowd, good-natured, knowing well his humped presence meant good luck.

The Cleanest Beggar, who had already won our respect and cash by her aspect, insinuated her spotless linen sleeve and wonderful darns.

'Mightn't she carry home the beautiful pottery for the excellent ladies? for we had fallen on a four cent dish of rare value and beauty and were clutching it. 'Or might she accept a token of their esteem?'

'But I gave to you yesterday!'

'Yes, I know,' with the bright old smile, leaning on her crutch, 'but today?'

Ah, where's the polenta of yesterday? Here was a suggestion. Has the beggar, once supposedly satisfied, but acquired a bond in your stock of generosity, and must one (per) cent be forever after the daily dividend? Dear soul! To spend her nights in cheerful patching and sousing, and by day to wander the pleasant streets, secure of immediate effect on scientific philanthropists.

Beyond her two men were roaring a wild drinking song, glass and bottle in hand. They intoned seriously, fixing each an eye on the other, while a third sold off a mountain of artichokes, bargaining stiffly with the crowd attracted by these rhymthic howls. An old woman watched their inflamed faces, her neck channelled, eyes deep, red and small, hair, grey snarl, hand, a claw. Here was a real countryman, quietly heavy, serious, beside his neat piles of wooden bowls, ladles, spools and spindles, lace bobbins, eggcups, and dishes of all sizes. These same the stout hill-women sell throughout Liguria in the gentle winter there, bright-eyed babies topping the paniers of clean lathe-turned goods.

There shouted Pantalon, auctioning off his yards of cotton, denim and sleasy woolen — a clown of a fat man! Deft to smile, haggle, coax, or scold, marked by the comic lines, creased below eyes of craft and humor, touched by a very sun of craziness. Suffocating below an extempore mitre of pink calico, tied in two pink elbows by a red string above his two red cars, his flushed face exhibited surprise, grief, sympathy or mock anger.

'Two *metri* and — was it not true, O saints, sixty-five *centimetri* good measure, of this most extraordinary blue and white. And where in a city even, a city of competitions and, as all know, of excessive rents and unparalleled exorbitances in price of oil and wine, could one acquire this combination of serviceable and becoming stuff for a *blusa* at such a price?

Per Bacco! Seventy-five *centesimi* only for this immaculate remnant!' He smote his hands, gazed upon an impassible crowd; his lip quivered, he folded the piece carefully, laid it away. 'Per Bacco! I would rather keep it for my own daughter!'

Facing the purling fountain, the shaded cherry woman and knots of buxom maids, wicker arks of pigeons in their hands, sat a real swell on the café veranda. He well became bis broad hat, white trousers, a town coat, and mournfully sucked the top of his Venetian cane. Beyond him a Turk turned the corner — did he not wear a red fez — must he not therefore come from the land of minarets and bubble domes? Suddenly, a middle-man surged across the upper piazza — the cattle market — clutching his prey, shoving in decision, aided by a convenient stalwart friend, toward the café, there to drink, and seal the bargain, in presence of the real owner of ox or cow.

The Cleanest Beggar smiled on us again, suddenly appearing on her tapping crutches. A youth of tatters and brown skin ran up, trying to sell shoe strings to peasants and evidently succeeding. Rags dripped from him. Scarecrow, infant offender, what a sight! He wore his bandages and draped breeks airily, festivelv. It was indeed a festal occasion to sell rat tails of black leather on a market day, this we felt. Felt also, it was gala unto all. Marketing was taken by vendor and by housewife alike, not as a customarv morning of toil and bad temper. Gaiety and good humor reigned. The patient woman who tried for an hour to see whether she really liked a calf well enough to buy it,— the bronzed fellow who clapped on every straw hat in the pile under the chestnut shade — white, orange, green, even — popping his own on again discouragingly after each trial, until the calm dealer coaxed his indecision with another color or shape; the clown, who later sat on an apparently undiminished bale of goods, peacefully talking politics with a friend, having sold his pink mitre — all enjoyed the day and life to the full.

Returning, the little drinking shops gorged with guests, children sat on knees; fire blazed on the great hearthstone; soup was passed. The town did a grand stroke of business.

But at three o'clock all was silent. The musing donkey of the street cleaning department advanced with regular halts down a street that turned white as his cart grew mountainous with litter. The burning bright piazza was empty. Only a vendor of pink and orange cakes, vanilla beans and carefully assorted peanuts lazed in the colonnade. Shop shutters were closed, blinds drawn. The little carioles had all slid down hill into the heat behind their mouse colored donkeys carrying empty baskets; Money had changed hands. Asolo rested!

Asking for a post card or two at the office, I put the nervous master into a state of fidget. 'Five hundred in the safe,' he cried, 'in a new packet, which is not yet opened.' He offered to go himself to the tobacconist, and darted off, returning unconsoled, breathless. 'Their cards were also, terminated!'

'Be pleased to be witness,' prayed the assistant. A young man in shirt sleeves was haled in from a near shop, luckily open; the rural postman stood solemnly by; I leaned by the window; the bag was brought from the safe

'You all behold that the seal remains untouched?' We nodded, silently. The seal was broken, decently, without haste, the cord conserved. Then, an accustomed finger ran down the invoice, and we watched the counting over of so many hundred stamps of *dieci*, so many of *cinque*, of *venti-cinque* (not many husbands in America, I judge — so few!), the reckoning up of postcards, careful enumeration of more valuable stamps — documentary and otherwise. We drew a long breath.

'It is in order,' he cried proudly, 'a thousand *lire* worth for the month. A thousand thanks!'

The young man withdrew, the postman slung on his bag, I received, and paid for, three cards, and departed, edified and enlightened.

Returning, Luca was at his loom in the cool basement of that old silk mill whence Pippa passed to her daily singing. What does he not weave on that old loom of his, first set up a hundred years ago, now worm-pierced, polished, mended, assisted! He weaves the lined used in the lace school above for drawn work and embroidery, chair covers, curtains barred in orange, export stuff for England, covers for mattresses, for pillows, linen for the resident artists to stretch and tone for painting. The colored hanks of linen are dyed in the town, close by are the spindles. Born in a neighboring province, he lacks the soft z, the slipshod accent of Veneto, is therefore proud. His honorable seventy years bent over the hundred threads in the green vine-lit light from the terraces, stockinged feet beat the clanking treadles — winter or summer. What a beautiful toil! spoke out his bright eyes. They said — I am content. The world has gone not ill.

La Luca stood beside him, hale, brown, in the fifties. How many people in this land are known to neighbor and associate by a sort of cognomen — parental name forgotten. La Luca, il Nero, l'Avaro; and did not Mario, our dark young *vetturino* in Casentino, cry once in pride — 'Ask anywhere for il Romagnuolo! They will know it is my father.'

Luca and his wife had reaped no dishonor in their sowing. She showed gladly the broad firm lace of exquisite pattern their daughter had made for her brother — a young priest.

'Last Sunday he sung his first mass here,' she chattered. 'Eh, but it was fine! And the presents! Come and see.'

We gazed, properly excited, on silver card plate, pink glass liqueur set, coffee cups, lives of saints, breviaries, catechisms, a horseman galloping on vast bronze inkstand, St. Anthony in colors, Madonna in a frame, crucifixes, a letter from Mr. Browning, telegrams, hearty good wishes.

'These we gave him, the brass clock and candlesticks. Behold this vase! There are of books for two hundred francs!' La Luca lived in joy. It was as if she had married off her son. The table was piled.

'And the dinner! Eleven priests. Forty-seven of us in all. Had you but seen the board! I am still tired. Forty-one chickens did we pluck and baste, and there were *minestra*, salads, vegetables, sweets and coffee. We sat down at four and at eleven had we finished.'

'And the vespers?' I demanded.

'Eh, they ran over to make a little vespers — a little one — and then returned. Until eleven. Ah — and the good wines — the Asti Spumante. Here is the empty box of the *torta*. You can see, there is still bread remaining,' she dived into a carved chest, unrolled a napkin, 'and behold in the court, four chickens still!' Four indeed, spared from the festival, clucked unconsciously in a wicker cage.

'Per Diana! that was a dinner,' mused Luca. 'Now we will go back to the college a little. He will take his examinations. I shall lay all away safely, and when the day arrives that he becomes Parroco, behold — all will be in readiness!'

We went through the bright open staircases and *loggie* of the old mill to the clean fresh upper chamber of the lace school which Mr. Browning has founded in memory of his father — 'il poeta' — they all call him, reverently, simply. I understood that the eder Browning had already bought the building before his death. A column of *mandorlata* is inserted in a loggia looking sunsetward; a terra-cotta Madonnina in the façade, shines skyey white and blue above the running fountain. The workroom for the girls has tones of soft light green on shelves, cupboards and work benches, the color most restful to a tired eye. The soft white curtains of Luca's make, striped with green, blow lightly over pots of bright leaves and flowers. Beyond them, vines frame the faint delicacy of the Euganeans. Even the paper on which the girls' designs are pricked is green. At Rapallo, I remembered, it was yellow, and the bobbins there were shorter, the cushions fatter, the work less firm. There were perhaps fifteen girls present with room for full twenty-four at the usual benches, neat, cleanly, attentive, one, deaf and dumb, taking pleasure in her work, little ones

beginning to plan out design in red thread for drawn work, older girls playing bobbins over pins in difficult patterns with ease and swiftness. The great beauty of the work lies in the sobriety and artistic value of the designs, some from Museum pieces, others from old drawings. Old altar lace patterns seemed to prevail. Their firm rectitude was carried out in absolute sincerity and nicety. In the samples from which orders could be given, in the rolls of lace for sale, was the same united beauty of design and work.

It was pleasant to see a spontaneous letter from Dean's Yard, Westminster, gratefully praising the quality of large orders executed here, and wishing all good to the school and its shy gentle teacher, who has studied at Vienna, and comes from the great Dolomite regions of Primiero, as she told us over coffee that evening, her eyes shining in memory of her peaks.

How many a town might be brightened by the introduction of just such schools, and their endowment. These young Italians are so deft, can be so easily led by affection. We always felt the Rapallo countrywomen to be especially self-respecting from the very fact that they are wage-earners. Unusally busy at their lace, in shade or sun before the door, according to season, they yet find time to be neat, to keep their children clean. The lace-workers in Burano, Predazzo, and Pellestrina have the same definite occupation. In Taormina an English woman has given the boys a chance to work at various trades, carving and the like. In the Industrial Home for Destitute Boys in the Cannaregio in Venice the boys are recommended even by priests to this Protestant school, learning typesetting, printing, bookbinding, shoemaking and carving outside their lesson hours. How gladly would I see more villages and towns furnished with such chances for training and encouragement — beholding how widely the future race is to gain thereby. Italy is eager to learn, is hard-working, frugal, industrious by nature, given the chance. From the laborer in Naples who will toil cheerfully sixteen hours a day, allow him but his siesta after octupus or salad at noon, to the women of Cadore, moving haystacks in June about the steep hay slopes, tilling the soil like ants while their husbands make ready the home in America — all have the industrious aptitude, the sense of the duty of work.

A smile rarely fails of response in this warm-hearted country of the *simpatica* trait. I've found the peasants generous, decent, trusty, trusting, as a whole. Yet in certain happy spots the type is more winning than in others, and in welcoming Poppi the light of hospitable friendliness is so beautiful upon their faces that one longs to introduce a trade or two to their gentle boys. I shall never forget my *contadini* up Rapallo river. Our tears have fallen together over little Giovanni's death. I must always be

grateful to a Browning for having given such a chance to the young girls of fair-spoken Asolo. It is a significant touch,— Pippa's singing seems to have consecrated the town.

Blithe-hearted, its women sew the little coats under the cool arcades, Giacomo or Georgio about their knees. They sit at twilight under the figs while the bats blunder and the swallows cry. The old postman bends, reading them the evening news. It grows dark. The sound of the many fountains fills a quiet air and folk look happily up at the old tower from cool terraces while Berici and Euganeans melt into the grey planes of the vast land of vines and culture at Asolo's feet.

It is in the autumn that Asolo flames. Oak, chestnut, woodbine, burn about the town or in it, up the slopes of Monte Grappa, toward the tablelands of the Sette Comuni; orange and red are massed about Canova's far white dwelling at Possagno, make the land gay seen from the Villa Armeni, where boys from the venetian Armenian school rollick in October air. Would I might see the vintage there! For from the tower by Catherine's ruined walls the broad campaign is seen, massed in vines. From the heights where Luigi leaned by the wizened wall-flowers, one can see the same broad spread beauty *il poeta* loved and lingered over, never satiate. When first he happened on the secluded hill town in that youthful walking trip and first gazed from its height on the touch of white that is Venice, the northward hint of serrated Dolomites, squat castle, arcaded streets and splendid sunsets, then was the vision of Asolo bathed for him in that glow of youth, that transcendent illumination that Wordsworth also felt, yet knew would fade.

That night we walked in the Giardino Inglese, where a happy man has made a home for his thoughts and charming desires. Roses glowed by thousands, grass paths eased the glow worm's journeying, bowers and alleys, soft turf of the hollow where once a Roman theatre held its throng, fragments of their seats, quaint conceits of eighteenth century dwarfish stone figures — all made rare and changing setting for glimpses of far vale and tower. Give me, some day, in some existence, the mind that may acquire such terraces of content.

In the town, small boys were gravely parading advertisements of the evening's performance of Marionettes. The notices were thrilling:

'Facanapa in Algeria.' 'Condemned to be impaled alive by the Bhei.' 'Seraglio of five hundred Donne.' 'Come and see!'

The Turk, his wife, their baby and housemaid were taking the air. Over the curved iron balconies hung dark haired girls from Gothic windows. The ancient solid shutters of Asolo were all flung back against old walls

and the clean air entered. A very festival of delightful kittens played in the street and even trailed a first mouse. Children drank from the cold flowing fountains. '*Quanto mi gusta ben?*' cried Marietta as we passed. She was hugging the baby!

A *festa* in Asolo is a serious thing. And a procession there such as Corpus Domini — though I am told that that of Good Friday is far finer — is beautiful to see, for its order, impressive faith and color. We were so fortunate as to have fair skies to shed startling light on the rosy and white mass of priests as they clustered about the gold brocade canopy under which walked the old priest with the Host, and over the crowd of peasants and townsfolk preceding and following, all winding up the hill, and back by the market piazza, devout and silent, save for chanting.

First, came a proud small boy, staggering under the weight of a cross, then his fellows, perhaps the most spirited of the assistants, men each with four great candles united, the priestly throng, the women. The children of Mary well became their fresh white robes. The three chosen for angels balanced their bobbing wings in sangfroid. All held little basketsful of red and white rose leaves which they scattered by the way.

Such an exhibition of clean well-brushed gowns among the women! Such lovely draperies of black or white lace over the pretty hair! Some of the very old women wore embroidered white lace, brought from a lavendered oak chest. Their chemises were white at wrist and throat. There was but one hat to be seen. Three girls in pale blue and long white veils bore one of the many banners. An old sexton in red kept the file in perfect order, prodding with his long prong of a cross as the Puritans must have used the rabbit foot. The coupled Carabinieri, standing at ease, superb, nonchalant, were useless but for the splendid note of their costume. Peasants unable to enter the church knelt on the stone pavement in the sun. The organ sounded over the worshippers within. It was over. The white infants were trotted into the Infant School and issued furnished with picture cards by the good nuns as reward of strenuous virtue. It was odd, on the morrow, to recognize one, led to school in broad hat and blue and white pinafore, clutching his own school bag in the bottom of which lay one smooth white egg — angel no more, but to be dealt with as future behavior should warrant.

Festa over, neatness and good conscience adorned the town. I wondered if, in Catherine Cornaro's day, the inhabitants of Asolo appeared to her as demurely cheerful, virtuous and diligent. Welcome her with shouts of pride they did, as the rich procession wound slowly up the hill, bringing her, dethroned, to play at court. But did she hum 'Provincial!'

and long for a Venetian hour of gala? Did she not rather lean from the tower, half imagining the mist of plain below to be indeed the purpled sea that spreat about the cliff of Cyprus — and she once more a Queen! But at what a price! Picture that premature splendid betrothal before the stately Doge; her youth, begemmed, empearled, seen as through a haze of brocaded matrons; that final ceremony, four years later; the girl full blossomed on the stage of Bucentaur's deck, taking graceful leave of her convenient aggregate of Fathers, the Senate! And then remember that first short year, blurred by intrigue, hatred, death — the horror of her widowed heart over the act that soon left her childless. Her recall, and splendid entry from Lido to Venice, still in respected state, led but to frank abdication, led to Asolo. It was a makeshift court, where yet she might confide in German doctor, discourse with Cyprian chaplain, laugh at quips and pranks of dwarf, and gather about her the beloved Fiammetta, and the rest, her *damigelle*. These and her suite would accompany her to ride, hunt, and idle in the famous summer villa at Altivole in the plains, marvellously gardened, furnished with water from afar.

What stately gowns she wore we know through Titian's eyes — stiff jeweled bands, soft veil, a crown above those flashing eyebrows — and behind, the hint of namesake's martyrdom. Mrs. Bronson has presented a portrait of her to the museum at Asolo, interesting for its detail of costume, and also a larger picture of her reception in Venice, the historic buildings of Piazza and Piazzetta ranged behind the welcoming Senate, Bucentaur resting on its oars in San Marco's basin, Lido, looming large.

Good, they termed her. In gentle Asolo, she prayed and followed in processions, endowed nunneries, was kindly, generous, Yet why should time hang heavily? Let us dance as well as pray. Her brilliant festivities would make fair romances, I doubt not. Eleaonor, Marchese of Aragon, journeyed thither with a full two hundred in train of ladies and gallant men. There were visits to receive and pay. She must greet her brother George in Brescia, and be received as was worthy. Fiammetta, she endowed, and married off, and on the wedding day, bade noble guests from Venice to the castle to make gay and honorable the ceremony. Bembo came as well, listened to them all conversing cynically or praiseworthily there upon Love, remembered, adjusted, evolved — behold his Asolani!

But if his comments on the great passion touch off only too truly the age and its usages and customs, so do the inspirations Robert Browning equally owes to Asolo illuminate an age of other philosophy, of high aim,— although Bembo at the end lifts love into holy air.

'God calls each one of us —' Browning too was called. In sorrow,

glorious joy, bereavement or age, he held bravely the torch of life of which his own pen writes. Pippa from her pure-aired hills, steps through many a heart, singing her hopeful song of devotion to good. 'Asolando,' at the last, climbed on. The century that produced such a great heart, gives place to another, full already of terrifying perplexities of nations and men. Could but the touchstone of Pippa be applied! and monarch, statesman, senator and bourgeois turn abashed, afraid, to high resolve. But it cannot be — and the world groans as it climbs. Though sometimes it guesses half a truth — that the splendid peasants of the soil in each land are perhaps those most truly devoted to duty and to endeavor, and that the bright blood that shines in Asolo and in wild hilly hamlets or region of the plain in land after land is possibly that most devoutly at a nation's service, is that which will flow for its land's freedom and safety, will be proud of her advancement, will train its sons to be brave and honorable.

Blessed Asolo! in which eyrie the good poet Browning must have found gentle smiles and customs, sobriety and religion, welcoming recognition of a stranger, cleanliness and civic pride, for they still flourish and as well, lives their pride in his affection — an honored memory.

'So he came feebly at the last,' they said. 'Upon the arm he leaned. Here, quietly, he wrote, much occupied. Even by the staircase of this shop he mounted to his simple room — no veiw. He was always writing. Vi scrisse Asolando.'

I've seen Nina read the Italian translation of 'one step just from sea to land' with astonishing fervor and emotion, with increasing approbation, the soft thrill of Veneto quite gone out of her voice.

'Why?' she repeated, 'why? Oh, I am not talking now, I am reading, reading Italian. Is it not beautiful — listen — once he was young, and now — ' and she went on,

'And now? The lambent flame is — where?
Lost from the naked world: earth, sky,
Hill, vale, tree, flower,— Italia's rare
O'er-running beauty crowds the eye —
But flame? The Bush is bare.'

THE FEELING FOR NATURE

By Max Batt

NATURE in her manifold aspects has ever been the subject of poet's song among civilized people; and, it may be added at once, the more cultured the nation or the individual, the deeper has been the feeling for her. Hence there is reflected in poetry the growth of general cutlure parallel with the development of the nature sense. To trace this evolution is a task of no slight dimension, though of exceeding import and interest, implying an extraordinary wide range of reading— in fact a task which but few men have had the courage and the requisite preparation to bring to completion. Among these very few ranks pre-eminently Alfred Biese whose monumental work, already well-known to the German public, has recently been made accessible to English readers, in an authorized translation.*

The growth of the nature-sense is most notable, of course, in modern times, largely because of the progress of science, but to understand its full significance a rapid survey of this feeling as recorded in ancient and medieval literature should be made at the outset.

If the attitude toward nature as found in the poetry of India is compared with that of the Bible, there is noticeable at once a remarkable contrast, due, of course, to their differing religious beliefs. Being pantheistic, the Hindoo writer associates most intimately with plants and animals and describes nature for her own sake, while for the Hebrew mind nature has as a rule no independent significance, being only a means by which Jehovah reveals himself. Thus the principal character in Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* says: "I really feel the affection of a sister for these young plants." And elsewhere this description is found: "The heat of the forest has been removed by the sprinkling of new water, and the Kataka flowers have blossomed. On the branches of trees being shaken by the wind, it appears that the entire forest is dancing in delight." On the other hand Psalm 104 reads: "Thou coveredst the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above

*The development of the Feeling for Nature in the Middle Ages and Modern Times by Alfred Biese, Director of the K. K. Gymnasium at Neuwild. London and New York, 1905.

the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away."

Very different from this feeling for nature and of far wider range than that found in Indic literature, was the feeling among the Greeks. Homer, typical of early culture in Greece, uses nature in clear-cut, often homely comparisons, while later writers delight in describing her more at length and in bringing her into harmony or contrast with man's thoughts and actions. Especially is this true of Euripides, who, anticipating Petrarch and Rousseau, lives on most intimate terms with nature. He, in fact, ushers in that sentimental, idyllic feeling which is given such apt expression by Theocritus and Kallimachos, and which forsooth differs but slightly from that of the eighteenth century, when pastoral poetry again flourished. These Greek writers, moreover, influenced Roman literature so strongly that but little originality is traceable in many of the Latin authors. Vergil and Horace, like Theocritus, heap endless praise on the charms of country life and appreciate the minutiae of nature, but neither they nor their fellow countrymen see beyond the Greek horizon — their eyes are holden to the beauty and grandeur of mountains and sea.

What contribution, then, if any, did the Middle Ages make to a fuller appreciation of nature? It is a well-known fact that with the introduction of Christianity emphasis was placed on spiritual man rather than physical, on God, rather than nature. The ascetic life left no room for the contemplation of the beautiful in nature. Her many phenomena were at first ignored, and ultimately dreaded and abhored. Thus it came to pass that not until the Renaissance an adequate appreciation of nature is recorded in that vast bulk of mediaeval literature. One might expect that lyric poetry, at all events, would show a closer observation and a deeper love of nature than any other writing, but even here the range is exceedingly narrow — joy in spring and complaint of winter are the ruling motives. Slight and isolated are the attempts at first hand observation of nature. The rule is that poet and painter used details from nature in a conventional way as ornament.

With the advent of the Renaissance comes a complete change of attitude. The world is once wore investigated, and enjoyment follows in the wake of knowledge. Man becomes critical. He is no longer content with the general, he wants the particular. He individualizes. His closer observation of nature brings about a deeper love for her.

Dante was the harbinger of this epochal movement, Petrarch its first great interpreter.

The author of the *Divina Commedia* has a keen and widely ranging eye. He sees the eagle and the hawk and speaks of the rose and the lily.

He beholds wide vistas and delights in the meandering stream. But the largest use of nature he makes in his numerous comparisons. In the *Inferno*, for example, he says:

As sails full spread and bellying with the wind
Drop suddenly collapsed, if the mast split,
So to the ground down dropp'd the cruel fiend,

And again:

As florets, by the frosty air of night
Bent down and closed, when day has blanch'd their leaves
Rise all unfolded on their spiry stems,
So was my fainting vigor new restored.

It is Petrarch, however, who forms the bridge between the classic feeling and the modern. "Many Hellenic motives handed on by Roman poets reappear in his poetry, but always with that something in addition of which antiquity showed but a trace — the modern subjectivity and individuality." This is evident in Sonnet 143:

I seem to hear her, hearing airs and sprays,
And leaves, and plaintive bird notes, and the brook
That steals and murmurs through the sedges green.
Such pleasure in lone silence and the maze
Of eerie shadowy woods I never took,
Though too much tow'rd my sun they intervene.

Petrarch's ascent of Mt. Ventoux near Avignon, as reported in a letter of April 26, 1335 and addressed to his confessor, is most characteristic of the transitional attitude toward nature. The poet enjoyed the invigorating climb and stood on the summit like one dazed as he beheld the great sweep of view spread out before him. He turned his eyes towards Italy, the rugged and snow-capped Alps, the Bay of Marseilles — and he began to think of his past life. Then he opened *The Confessions of St. Augustine* and read that men forget their own selves while admiring mountains and seas and the course of stars. And he closed the book, descended, angry with himself for marveling at earthly things, when he should have known that there is nothing marvelous save the soul. Here, indeed, the modern delight in nature bursts forth though still restrained by the shackles of medieval thought.

But actual landscapes are not described in detail even by Pertarch. More than a hundred years roll on before Aeneas Sylinus (Pope Pius II) speaks with unbounded enthusiasm of his country residence and its environs. In May, 1462, on his way to the baths of Viterbo he descants upon the spring beauties about him: the tremendous quantity of genista that make

the field look like a mass of flowering yellow, and the purple and white and the thousand different colors seen on shrub and grass; the vigil of crow and ring dove; and the owl uttering lament with funeral note. Such thoroughly sincere delight in nature at Aeneas Sylvieus felt and expressed, is not heard of again in literature until the era of Rousseau and Goethe.

While nature came thus to the fore in Italian literature, she began in England, too, to have her literary interpreters. Chaucer, the first of English modern writers, a contemporory of Pertarch, treats her in a realistic manner. His is the agricultural view. He loves not waywardness or irregularity, but order in nature. He indulges in no fantastic descriptions, as does Spensor two hundred years later, but, aided by a keen color sense, gives us accurate pictures of natural scenery.

For more intense, more individual, subjective, was Shakespeare's grasp of nature. His commentators, almost without exception, have spoken of the marvelous use he makes of her as the background for his dramas. One need but read *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet* to be convinced of Shakespeare's genius in the treatment of nature. What fitter accompaniment could there be to the old King's madness than a storm on the heath, and to Julia's ardent love than the singing of the nightingale in the pomegranate! Or what locality is more in accord with melancholy, brooding Hamlet than a land of mist and long nights, under a gloomy sky (as Boerne says) where day is only night without sleep, and the tragedy holds us imprisoned like the North itself, that damp dungeon of nature.

In Shakespeare's sonnets as well as in his dramas there is a highly poetic use of nature — such treatment as is found previously, perhaps only in Theocritus and Kallimachos. Thus we read, for example, in, Sonnet 33:

> Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
> Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
> Gliding pale streams with heavenly alchemy
> Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
> With ugly rock on his celestial face,
> And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
> Stealing unseen to West with this disgrace:
> Even so my sun one early morn did shine
> With all triumphant splendor on my brow
> But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;
> The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
> Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
> Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

Parallel with this growing appreciation of nature in poetry, and even antedating it, is the development of landscape in painting. Just a word about it in passing. In the early works of Italian art, for example, interest is centered in man, nature is altogether ignored or receives but scant treatment. Observe, for instance, Giotto, and even the early Renaissance painters. Later man and nature are of equal importance, the latter serving as a background. Tintoretto's work illustrates this change. Then, as nature is more closely observed, she occupies more of the canvas, and the human figures dwindle in proportion until at last they disappear altogether and the era of landscape painting is ushered in. Think, on the one hand, of Claude Lorraine and Salvator Rosa, and on the other, of the Dutch masters with Ruysdael as the culminating point.

While nature receives thus full artistic expression in landscape painting by the middle of the seventeenth century, she has to wait a hundred years more before she is duly appreciated in literature. During these hundred years, the Age of Louis Avatorze, court life absorbs all attention. Emphasis is laid on form and refinement. Regularity prevails everywhere: the gardens of Versailles as laid out by the famous Le Nôtre typify this wonderfully well. The appeal in literature is made to the intellect rather than the emotion. Suppression, not expression, of feeling is carefully fostered. Hence there is wanting, in the treatment of nature, firsthand observation and genuine love of her many charms as well as of her awe-inspiring manifestations. Opitz in Germany, Pope in England, and Voltaire in France, are the leading writers of this period, giving fullest utterance to the thoughts of their generation.

The change of attitude toward nature, the awakening of feeling for the romantic, is distinctly noticeable about the middle of the eighteenth century, as already intimated. Symptoms of this return to nature can be felt, to be sure, before 1750. Such poets as Gunther and Thomson seek nature for solace or pleasure, and show appreciation even of her sterner aspects. Night and winter, for example, abhorred by their predecessors find in them ardent admirers, Yet they, as well as their contemporaries though their range is wider, their observation closer, and their expression more adequate, fail to see the grandeur and majestic beauty of mountains or oceans. These phenomena were fully appreciated only several decades later when Rousseau, Goethe and Byron occupied the stage of European thought.

Rousseau, as Biese says, was the real exponent of rapture for the high Alps and romantic scenery in general. Born in the midst of most beautiful Alpine surroundings, he imbibed with his every breath intense love for those

rugged, snow-capped mountains. He tells us how on one of his many rambles, it was in 1728 — he forgot all about the time. "Before me were the fields, trees, flowers, the beautiful lake, the hill country, and high mountains unfolded themselves majestically before my eyes. I gloated over the beautiful spectacle while the sun was setting. At last, too late, I saw that the city gates were shut. His *Confessions* abound with glowing descriptions of Alpine scenery, surpassed perhaps only by those recorded in *La Nouvelle Heloise*. But for a scientific as well as aesthetic appreciation of the Alps one must wait a few years more — till Goethe's journey to Switzerland in 1779.

And this brings us to "the most accurate, individual, and universal interpreter of German feeling for nature. Goethe had given ample evidence of his transcending genuis in his novel *Werther's Leiden*, where the hero runs through the whole gamut of emotional experience and finds corresponding moods in nature. But Goethe's dramas and lyrics, rather than his novels, are of the greatest import from our present point of view One can trace in them his ever widening grasp of nature, from the idyllic-pastoral to the pantheistic conception, and thereby understand at the same time the true source of his greatness: the abandoning of any standpoint as soon as he passed beyond it. Illustrative verses crowd upon one, making selection exceedingly difficult; yet if any of his shorter poems were to be singled out to show that close communion between man and nature, it would probably be the poetic gem *Herbstgefuhl*, which runs thus:

Flourish greener as ye clamber,
O ye leaves, to seek my chamber;
Up the trellised vine on high
May ye swell, twin-berries tender,
Jucier far, and with more splendor
Ripen, and more speedily.
O'er ye broods the sun at even,
As he sinks to rest, and heaven
Softly breathes into your ear
All its fertilizing fulness,
While the moon's refreshing coolness,
Magic-laden, hovers near.
And alas! ye're watered ever
By a stream of tears that rill
From mine eyes — tears ceasing never,
Tears of love that naught can still.

Goethe, according to Biese's excellent summary, "not only trans-

formed the unreal feeling of his day into real, described scenery, and inspired it with human feeling, and deciphered the beauty of the Alps, as no one else had done, Rousseau not excepted; but he also brought knowledge of nature into harmony with feeling for her, and with his wonderfully receptive and constructive mind so studied the earlier centuries, that he gathered out all that was valuable in their feeling."

Thus nature was from the universal, pantheistic point of view adequately interpreted in France and Germany. But erelong there arose in England, too, poets who voiced their deep feeling for her with enthusiasm that knew no bounds. To Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley we are immeasurably indebted for some of the most beautiful nature poems in the world's literature. *Tintern Abbey*, *Childe Harold*, *Ode to the West Wind*, give the fullest expression to our modern feeling for nature. Later poets have, on the whole, merely wrought changes upon the notes struck here. This is true, to a large extent, of the members of the so-called 'Romantic' School. Since their day the progress of science has had a noticeable effect on the feeling for nature. She is observed today not only with enthusiasm but with exceeding accuracy; and deft interpreters are not rare in either poetry or painting. Thus the inspiring, broadening influence of nature is felt perhaps more strongly today than during any other period in the world's history.

PASTORAL POETRY

By Mary Louise Dunbar

THE true pastoral poem is no longer written. It had its birth in a primitive age. It sang of youth and artless love in tune with the beauty of the world, and the simplicity of the Golden Age. It was a perfect expression of that happy time, full of the joy of existence, of the freedom of Pagan man, who was in one sense almost as unmoral and irresponsible as the birds of the air, or the beasts of the field.

But Keats, who gives us such a fresh picture of Sylvan joy in the beginning of the Endymion, tells as that though now there is

'No crowd of nymphs, soft voiced and young and gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses and pinks and violets to adorn
The shrine of Flora in its early May:'

yet there are left 'delights as high as these' and he finds under pleasant trees where Pan is no longer sought, 'a free and leafy luxury.' It may be that nature has a sweeter balm and a holier uplifting to a heart weary of the rush and bustle of modern life; a deeper joy than any hind of the Golden Age could know in the delight of mere living in sunshine and sweet air, under soft skies, beside rippling brooks, with glimpses of the far wistful beauty of blue hills. The world is too old for real Arcadian simplicity.

The Greek who handed down the pastoral to us had little background of Antiquity, little knowledge of an older learning and poetry than his own.

From the beginning he saw all beauty, all loveliness with his own eyes; transplanted to Sicily he gives to us the freshness of his own impressions. One 'the heir of all the Ages' realizes more of the sadness of life, its possibilities for good and ill.

In America we have inherited the Anglo-Saxon gravity, and the sense of personal responsibility. From our christian training we long for the Beatitudes amid the beauty of the world. We would make of our lives a blessing.

Social questions and the pity of human suffering, take away something of the ease of Sylvan rest. We cannot forget that our leisure is only a temporary refreshing in the midst of our struggles for the goal that is set before us. If Pan were still abroad, we should hear the cry of the human above his pipings. Some of us, tired of vanities and artificial conditions, long for the simple life. We theorize about it: practice for a while and take notes of our experiences in it.

Again, we are consumed with a grand curiosity. The leisure of country life is full of it. We analyze and classify the flowers by the wayside and forget the bird songs in eager inquiry as to the lineage of the singer, while we pry into his domestic arrangements and family life. It is good that there are still some dreamers whose resting time is full of the fragrance of blossoming fields and dewy woods; of the 'multitudinous laughter of the sea,' or its quiet reveries; who 'invite their souls' to be soothed by soft airs, and unclassified bird songs; and who listen to what wandering winds, sighing pines and the ramble of brooks have to say of the peace of God. Our poets philosophize for us, and find that nature gains in interest through its subtle influence upon the heart of man. The pastoral came as the morning comes. It lilted itself into the rosy dawn of literature.

While it grew out of Shepherd life, it was evidently born of the beauty loving Pagan Greek nature, as is proved by the different influence of the conditions of that life upon the graver Hebrew. We go back to the creation for the beginning of that life. While the first ideal of human happiness

is found in a garden, man went out from Eden to till the soil, to tend flocks on the uplands and in green valleys. The first shepherd, in the story, seems to have drawn nearer in spirit to the great lost garden of God, than the husbandman who delved in the ground to make another garden in a waste of thorn and bramble. Patience, perserverance, trust in the God who sends the sunshine and the refreshing shower must certainly develop in the heart of the gardener who is in right lines with God's purposes. It was in a very different spirit that the first tiller of the earth, and the first guardian of the flocks, undertook the young world's work. Who knows but Cain, impatient with the conditions which sin had brought, chose in the right of eldest son, to toil in hopes of speedier results which might bring back the lost joys of Eden.

It would seem that Abel had the better part. The Shepherd lived in the mystery of long nights under the solemn stars, in air spiced with the perfume of flowers which send out their souls into the cool dark. He watched for the day dawn while the pale starlight lingered to meet the first flush of rose and pearl. Immortal meanings must have been revealed to him when the day slowly shimmered around him,— a new creation.

The Hebrew found in nature the entrance to the unseen presence of God. The 104th pslam is a rhapsody of adoration in the midst of the whole universe. Forgetfulness of self was the first lesson of the shepherd's life. He must lead his flock. Each sheep and lamb had its name and appealed to Him through its individual need, and alone under the stars he must trust to his single handed bravery in defence of his charge. So David slew the lion, and there were robbers as well as wild beasts. Amid such dangers was the dignity of the manhood of the Shepherd in the East cultivated. In cold and heat, storms and tempests, he had no thought for himself. Leading back the straying, seeking the lost, binding up the wounded,— healing the sick, strengthening the weak, to the devout Hebrew his care becomes the best type of Heavenly love. With his pipe and simple song he cheers himself in hardship, or he utters heroic notes of triumph over difficulties and dangers. He has also his halcyon days, when he leads his flocks in green pastures, and beside still waters, and the psalm of the Shepherd King becomes one of the sweetest comforts of the world today. Moses prepares for his great work of leading a people from bondage, tramp, tramp, tramp, keeping sheep in Midian. Truth was revealed under great Egypt's star flamed sky to Shepherds tending their flocks, the truth that led them to the manger and to Christ. Whether in myth or miracle great teachings have come to the world from the pastoral life.

To a Pagan land, where the profoundest feelings are asleep in a beauty

loving people, we owe a different debt. The Poet whom literature claims as the leader in Pastorals was to come from the West, though he had Greek blood and was nourished upon Greek traditions.

The Greek, seldom a colonist, planted himself and his intellectual life in Sicily, a land as fair as his own, with skies as clear and as restful. He found the same splendor and sweetness of roses, the same resinous odors of cedars as in the violet land of Greece. It was at the time of his greatest intellectual power. 'His minstrels chanted for Kings and heroes; the winner of the Olympic games was welcomed by hymns, any of which Pindar might have written.' The energy and the thought of the nation, that for centuries gave to the world some of the most stirring odes of patriotism, and the most exquisite utterances of human love, ambition and sorrow, were still glorious. Under the influence of the Greek Colonists in the heights of Taronemion and in Syracuse we see the Sikels of the islands advancing beyond the hill fortress, and along the borders of the purple sea. For one hundred and fifty years this emigration to the beautiful island continued. Its inhabitants were no longer native Sikels, but Sikliotes, mixed in blood, traditions and customs. What interest in a land where the first chapters of a history, which is not yet finished, were written by Thucydides. It was in the third century before Christ — that Theocritus of Greek descent, began to write his 'little pictures' in words, of Shepherds. Neat herds, fishermen, and the pastoral sprang into life, bursting in the Southern warmth and softness at once into bloom. We know little of the life of Theocritus, save allusions in his own works. In an epigram appended to his poems, he says: 'I am a Syracusan, son of Praxagoras and Philenna.' Before his genius lifted itself into song, Athens had fallen and Greek literature had so declined as to seem dead. Its inspiration was gone with the heoric kings and the epic minstrels. Greece was scarcely more than the western portion of a divided empire. Alexandria was now the center of intellectual life which Athens had been. Theocritus wrote of simple life in the simplest ways. His song was in harmony with the great voice of nature. The undercurrent of human love and sorrow, hopes and disappointments, blend with the humming of bees, the thrilling of birds, the plaintive lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, the rippling of water, the lilt of the peasant in the fragrant air. He was a rustic minstrel who sometimes touched deepest themes, and he wrote not alone for Shepherds, but for the culture of Greece and Sicily. His rural idyls were the patterns for Virgil's Eclogues and all later pastorals. When he borrowed from the past of Greece, it was to use myth or legend, with which the Greek Colonists had peopled the rivers and hills of Sicily, with the inspiration which he found in the nature all about him.

The first idyl of Theocritus suggests that its form may have been borrowed from Greek dialogue, and that may look back to the oriental Antiphonal Chanting which was found before his time in Sicilian Musical Matches. The Shepherd greets the goatherd in a shady place, beside a spring. 'Sweet is the whispering sound of yonder pine tree, goatherd, that murmureth by the wells of water, and sweet are thy pipings.' We can see them sit down 'among the tamarisks on sloping knoll, in face of Priapus, by the fountain fairies, where the oak trees are.' The goatherd puts down his primitive musical instrument.

Perhaps the wind by the river first taught the use of the simple reed, and from a broken one, some one learned to pierce it with holes by which ready fingers produced different notes. It had satisfied many a rural musician for ages before him, and he knew that the great God Pan could need no better. With rustic hospitality he offers the Shepherd a charming ivy wreathed cup full of goatsmilk; a cup which he tells him he 'will think has been dipped in the well spring of the hours.' Its decorations have suggestions of the delights of woodland and sea. What a Sicilian picture in Andrew Lang's rhymthic prose! What would it be in the sweet Dorian speech? The descriptions of the carving of the cup, is too long for a pastoral song, says a critic. But Theocritus was hampered by no rules. Men now make rules from the perfection of what he wrote. Thyrsis sings at the goatherd's invitation the inherited song of the Greek rural hero Daphnis. That miracle of various work, the cup carved with soft Acanthus, is quaffed three times by the singer of the magical chant of love and grief, of violets and beautiful waters, and Daphnis dying in the hate of Aphrodite. Another idyl with the same form of song and response between love-lorn Simaetha and her handmaid Thestylis brings us to a garden beneath a moonlit sky, where Simaetha with magic wheel and barley grain, and the knitting of bright red wool into witch knots, tries to invoke spells to bring back her wandering lover, just as some Sicilian maiden would do today, perhaps because Theocritus has here imprisoned in verse the superstitions of Greece and the beautiful island. But critics who find Theocritus affected, his hinds too sentimental and polite in their wooing, should remember that the modern Greek goatherds and Shepherds, still passionate and refined, sing in a Theocritan strain of flowers, and bees, the music of waters, the sweetness of pine needles in some fragrant nook; the joy of existence in sunshine and soft winds.

The fancy of the Greek could still understand the goatherd who leaves his flock on the hillsides and seeks to woo Amaryllis in her cavern veiled with ferns and ivy, and full of the old traditions, uses the tale of famous

lovers of ancient Greek days. Is there anything new under the sun? since then the lover asks: 'Loves she: Loves she not,' of poppy petals, just as some New England maiden might question the magic of a daisy. The Sicilian offends the critics again it may be, for the pastorals are not all of Shepherd life. Sometimes he writes of simple fisherman. Two herdsmen who are not mere Sikliote rustics, sing of the Greek Cyclops Polyphemus and his love for Galatea, in a musical contest.

Always the hinds of Theocritus in his early lines voice the old, old story which has been told anew, yet the same through the ages, that human love and longing, which in his song, binds hearts that are dust, with the loving, living ones today. Later, Theocritus gave sketches of contemporary life a little more conventional, of epithalamiums chanted by fair maidens with blooming hyacinths in their hair; of happy bridegrooms upon whom some good spirits had sneezed out a blessing. The maidens 'twine a wreath of the lotus flowers that lowly grow' and hang it on a shadowy plane tree, which with soft oil from a silver phial they have dedicated to the bride. Sometimes he sings of poverty, of vengeance and murder, discords in the pastoral, though through the songs there still breathes the voice of nature. Perhaps Theocritus has been in Alexandria, and amid its gaities, its magnificence, luxury, and corruption, has taken some of the fever of its life into his veins. His form is now more of the epic, and the Greek elegy. At first his song bubbles and gushes with the freshness of the Spring Arethusa, leaping from its bed of snow into the sunlit air, which the Greek Colonists found more than seven hundred years before Christ, near the coast of Sicily. It was a spring famous for its sweetness and clearness, until one day the sea broke through the rocks, and mingling with its waters made them brackish. Arethusa still sparkles in its rocky Sicilian bed, but its waters are bitter. You cannot drink of it.

But on green banks, in air scented with rose and cedar you can still take deep draughts from the magic, word embellished cup of Theocritus, filled with the sweetness of rural life before the weary world had added its wormwood and gall.

Greek movements have crumbled, the theories of its philosophers moulder to nothing, its old poets are dust, but the loves and sorrows of its shepherds and neat herds, who stood in the dewy grass of morning in the sweet fields and on the hills ages ago, through the crystal verse of Theocritus have become a part of human life in every clime and country.

Nowhere else has the transplanted pastoral become so domesticated as in England. Strong as was the influence of Theocritus, especially upon Spenser, there is no doubt that many of the English pastorals were inspired

by some of the imitators of the Sicilian. Certainly Sidney was influenced by Sannazara, though his Arcadia is less artificial than the affected and rather insipid poem of the same name by the Italian poet. Lope de Vega gave form and flavor to English pastorals later, but he took his inspiration from Sannazara rather than Theocritus. The English translations of Virgil which in the rennaissance occupied some of the poets, no doubt were the greatest power in bringing the pastoral to England. The rebirth of old architecture and its accompaniment of revival of classic literature, brought about such wonderful erudition as we read of in the nobles of the time, in Lady Jane Grey, Elizabeth, and other ladies of the Court.

Virgil, who very nearly realized the ambition of his youth to be the Italian Theocritus, was not a bad leader into the field of English pastoral. He certainly gives a living voice to the whole charm of Italy. But the world of Virgil was older than that of Theocritus, and his song was less fresh and spontaneous. It is no longer a lilt in the early morning. The infinite sky reflected in the quiet bay was the same, but the vines clung often to ruined walls, though the bees still sipped their blossoms. Just such birds warble in Italy, as Theocritus heard in Sicily, but their melody appeals to a mind more complex in quality and interest, moved profoundly by the deep currents of the changing world at one of the most critical epochs in the history of man. Peasant girls who seem a part of the sunshine and the beauty about them, are like the loves of Sicilian Shepherds; but they stand in the shadow of historic towers, and feel something of the influence of the pulse beat of the great world which is Rome. Virgil brought to the court of Augustus from the green shade of umbrella pines in his retreat by the Bay of Naples, the peace of the unfathomable sky, the glitter and splendor of waters studded with emerald and Amethyst islands. He idealized the round of labor of the Italian peasant. He finds the brown of the earth richer and deeper in the ploughman's furrows. The life of rustic toil is glorified by the beauty of Italy. With the tillage of the fields is associated the lore of the constellations, the changes which form the farmer's calendar. The human interest of such homely subjects as the cultivation of fields, the rearing of flocks, the tending of bees, is in the Bucolics, strengthened by stories of the farmer's life. His Georgics give us the struggle of human strength with the forces of nature. Life was more strenuous in Italy in Virgil's time, than in Sicily three hundred years before.

Some of the Eclogues are purely pastoral, but Virgil is no servile copyist. His genuine sentiment for nature animates whatever is imitative. In the second Eclogue it is true that he takes the subject from Theocritus. The Shepherd boy Corydon, deeply enamored of Alexis, a youth of great beauty,

sings under the scorching sun, and calls the nymphs to bring lilies to his love, and Nais to join violets and poppies to the sweet smelling dill. He gathers quinces hoary with tender down, chestnuts which Amaryllis loved, and adds plums of waxen hue in the real Syracusan strain. Even in the beginning of the fourth eclogue the Sicilian Muses are invoked, yet it is not so Theocritan in character. Its stately monotonous rhythm fits its graver mood. Its ideas are derived from the Greek Golden Age, but as well from the later Sibylline prophesies. The great world of Rome read between the lines a message from the Infinite, a prophesy of the coming Christ. This sentiment had its origin says Domenico Camparetti of the University of Florence, in the desire of the Christians to assimilate the words of Virgil whom they admired, with the ideas impressed upon them by the new faith, and to purify him from what they considered his only fault, the Pagan Spirit.

Whether Menalcus and Mopsus celebrate the funeral eulogium of Daphnis; or Damon mourns the loss of his mistress; or the charms of an enchantress are recorded; or Gallus the martial sings of his love for Cytheria, you feel in Virgil's supreme power of diction and rhythm, the hand of the perfect artist, but the poetry of the world does not gush and ripple and bubble like a sturdy little spring laughing up from the very foundations of the world as in Theocritus. After the many translations of Virgil into English he was no longer in the minds of people the Magician superstition had made him. The knowledge of him and his work helped them to turn from the fancies of the Middle Ages to observe and love the beauty all about them. Translated to the colder North, the sentiment of the Sicilian muse found a congenial environment in the beauty of England's lush meadows, undulating and wooded slopes, its old forests, its willow bordered water courses. Here also were love and youth and rustic wooing to which it was easy to link the self abandon of an earlier time. There was an enchanting beauty of the English Springtime. There were bleatings on the hilltops and lowings in the valleys. The ploughman's furrows laughed in rich harvests.

But the Shepherds of England in the Sixteenth Century were very different from those in Sicily almost a thousand years before. The real English guardian of flocks was quite likely to be a Saxon Clown. Pastoral poetry is simple, rustic, but not clounish. The singing of ancient shepherds was real or imagined, in the leisure of a softer clime. They were poets then as they are now. From the very conditions a pastoral could not be so spontaneous in England, and a poetry which is imitative must be to some extent, artificial. Wyatt and Surrey were the pioneers in a new poetic life in England.

They were professed imitators of Classic Authors, but they also listened to Petrarch, and their own Father Chaucer, who had no doubt felt the influence of French songs. They really owed as much to the fourteenth century as to the first. Surrey's 'Complaint of a Dying Lover' is, save Henryson's 'Robine and Makyne,' the first pastoral poem in the English language.

Dreams of Shepherd life became a fashion of the day. Fancy dressed everything in this rustic garb. Spenser called Raleigh, whom he would honor, 'the Shepherd of the Ocean.' When Sidney died be bewailed him as a Shepherd and wrote of the loves of Astrophel and Stella in the sonnets of Sidney, as if they were a pastoral story of rustic lovers. Sidney in his Arcadia has evidently felt the influence of Venetian painters whom he saw, as well as Sannazara, whom he imitated. In the groves, uplands and gentle valleys of Arcadia gather courtly people. Brocades, jewels, velvets, sweeping plumes animate the scene. It might be a large canvas of Tintoretto or Veronese, or a garden party in the days of Elizabeth, with a dance of piping Shepherds for entertainment; for these rustics were likely to appear at any moment, and also were inclined to talk poetry and metaphysics! There is no simple sentiment, but the atmosphere of the Court of pleasing wit and elegant compliment.

It is good to see, however, that Sindey, the soul of courtesy, the Knight 'without fear and without reproach,' whose personal charm has really come down through the ages, writes of a pure love.

It is generous, platonic, romantic. In Spenser even more is it a holy thing. Lover of sensuous beauty as he is he has a deeper feeling for moral beauty.

'Love is Lord of truth and loalties
Lifting himself out of the lowly dust,
On golden plumes up to the purest skies.'

His Shepherd's Calendar is a dreamy, tender pastoral, yet the atmosphere is that of thinkers and poets. Hearts are not as fresh and natural as in the Golden Age. There is ecstacy over the beauty of England, though the landscape is enchanted with the fancy of the poet. If Spenser invokes the Sicilian muse in imitations, he is also inventive. His stanza was his own creation. Ingeniously he presents twelve eclogues of the Shepherds life in a Calendar of the months, and so close and loving is his observation that there is little repetition of the phases of nature. His Shepherds, however, discourse of theology and politics more than of love. He writes as English Colin Cloat, and has the good sense to give his pastoral people English rustic names like Willy and Cuddy. The poem is national though

often inconsistent. The court made allegory as fashionable in the days of Elizabeth, as the pastoral sham.

Perhaps, as has been said, 'an artifical style and a grand harmony were natural to Spenser.' He never sings as the birds sing. After him the poets of nature burst out into melodious carols. The song penetrates us like the morning wind that has swept over forests and fields. Before the time of the Normans, England with its many sweet church bells was called the ringing-island. It might well have been named the singing island in the days of Elizabeth and James. Very few of the poets who ape the pastoral have the power to enchain the interest of readers today, who are not devoted lovers of poetry. It is the gushing song of nature, perhaps, bubbling out of a drama or an epic which touches our hearts. Who does not remember Marlowe's amorous shepherds invitation 'Come live with me and be my love,' and Raleigh's half mocking reply; or the purely lyrical songs in Shakespeare's plays, with their sweet medley of meadow flowers, bird songs, breezes and happy milkmaids in the tranquillity of rustic life. There is more pastoral feeling in Shakespeare's 'As you like it,' than in Sidney's 'Arcadia.' Fletcher's 'Faithful Shepherdess' is best in purely lyrical parts. The songs have grace and airy lightness. Ben Johnson in his 'Sad Shepherd' gives us mossy vistas in Sherwood Forest. There is no time, nor inclination to trace all the pastoral touches in English poetry for years. Even that 'God gifted organ voice of England,' John Milton gave us a Masque of pastoral sweetness in rarest rhythm. In 'L'Allegro, the 'milkmaid sings blythe,' and the shepherd tells his tale. Nor can we note the many essays in this field of poetry. 'Britannia's Pastorals by William Brown, and the Shepherd's Hunting by George Withers have other excellencies, as well as the essentials of simplicity, brevity, delicacy. Thomas Randolph's Cotswold Eclogue is one of the best in the language. Herrick's gift of song, originality, and his loving eyes for rural beauty, his interest in homely country life, make the pastoral more at home in England, but like Lovelace and Suckling he sees nature on a small scale.

It is good to get away from the English midland ditches, to the clear brown burns of the north with Allan Ramsey. Scotch manners and motives are crystallized in his 'Gentle Shepherd.' You feel the influence of the songs and ballads of old Scotland. The beauty of earth and sky are not forgotten in the pathos of human joy and sorrow. The poet has read Virgil and his English imitators, or he would not, in the land of the bagpipe make lowland Shepherds play upon flutes and reeds; but his verse presents the nature of the land, where 'through gowany glens the burnies stray,' and is still a favorite among lowland reapers and milkmaids. Pope's

pastorals written when he was only sixteen are very perfect artificial flowers. They have the pure style of the man who 'set his efforts to correctness.' He deplores the lyric measure of Spenser from his own standpoint of devotion to the rhyhmed couplet, and he wonders at Spenser's Calendar of the 'Months in which nature is so much alike,' proving that Mr. Alexander Pope studied nature from the gardens of English villas. The violent little man after an invective against the sham pastoral of Ambrose Phillips urged Gay to 'paint rustic life with the gilt off,' and Gay found congenial work in his 'Satire upon certain insipid young men.' He certainly cannot be charged with 'cloying sweetness.' His shepherds wear hob nailed shoes, and dress like cowherds. His introduction to his 'Right Simple Eclogue essayed after the too ancient guise of Theocritus,' is sufficiently sincere. 'Thou wilt not find my Shepherdesses playing on oaten reeds, but milking the kine, tying up the sheaves, or if the hogs are astray driving them to their styes. My Shepherd sleepeth not under myrtle shades, but under a hedge, nor doth he vigilantly defend his flocks from wolves, for there are none.' Evidently the pseudo-Greek pastoral was passing.

One might say that it disappeared, though Eighteenth Century poets were still slavishly Classic. For a long time fancy had fastened itself to the Past. It accomplished a picture of the Golden Age, of which one wearies, even though it pressed into the service of the representation all the beauty of England's landscapes, the murmur of its streams, the music of its woods and winds.

Perhaps James Thomson was the first to break the classic monotony with a new note. His fresh treatment of simple country life, his manly and sincere love of nature, which marked every detail of beauty or interest, were a welcome relief from poets who had kept themselves so long remote from every day life. Not only the loveliness of border landscape appealed to him, but the 'withered hill of March above the moist meadow.'

In the middle of the Eighteenth Century there was born a singer in Scotland who was to voice nature, as he himself says, 'in the melting thrill and kindling fire' of the song which burned its way into all hearts. Daily life and humble duty were no longer common. With pathos and power Robert Burns gave to manhood its dignity and possibilities. His genuis flashed to the world the intensest feeling of a passionate heart. All the beauty of the world poured forth in a flood of liquid harmony, sweeping away all Classic bounds.

But the real interpreter of English nature stood at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. Not only did he 'look upon the hills with tenderness,' and make dear friendship with the streams, groves and moors of his Westmoreland home, but he loved the very humblest of his fellow men.

'Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.'

To him

'The meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.'

Simple and childlike, yet free and fearless as the Westmoreland winds, with a deep sympathy for shy daffodils and daisies, the rustic beauty of the hedgerows and the life of the dalesman's cottage, he was intense in wilder, grander moods.

Another Hebrew he, who, like the one of old, felt an unseen presence in nature.

To him the beauty and glory of the world in his little mountain nook, or abroad in other lands was an expression of the thought of God. In wood, on mountain top by the murmuring Rothap, or under the solemn earnest stars, he was in the very presence chamber of the Infinite.

Wordsworth, was the right interpreter to Englishmen of rural England, which artistic paganism could never express. Matthew Arnold says:

He found us when the Age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round:
He spoke and loosed our hearts in tears,
He laid us as we laid at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth.

. . . . . .

'Our foreheads felt the wind and rain,
Our youth returned: . . .
The freshness of the early world.'

THE GOLDEN BOUGH

By Edith M. Thomas

A mortal maiden to Persephone, while descending to Avernus

O Cora Persephone, Goddess, hearken to me!
  Give me an entrance into thy realm beyond sight!
I come with a sign from Demeter, thy mother, to thee —
  Yet, I come for myself, seeking Light in the gift of the Night.

For lo! when, in Enna, of thee stern Pluto made theft,
  My love,— a young shepherd, was grazing his flock, unaware;
And he, when the dumb, stricken earth was shaken and cleft,—
  Engulfed by thy passing, he, too, lost the light and the air!

Since, on the earth, has my day darkened down in its morn,
  And the hopes of the summer hath frost in the springtime foredone —
Since the soul of my soul to the Kingdom Unseen hath been borne,
  I seek there my Light more dear than the mortal-loved sun!

Thou, the bereft,— the bereaver, bring I to thee
  This bough, all golden, from woodlands silent with gold! —
Thou hast seen the faint mist of the leaf-buds on thicket and tree,
  But the grace of the ripening year didst never behold!

For this hath thy sorrowing mother full often made moan,
  As she sat by the sheaves, her fair head buried deep in her hands:
"Lent to me only in springtime, she never hath known
  The splendor and grief that are mine in these harvest-bright lands!

Still lifting her voice (made one with the sighings that stir
  Through sheaves, ungathered, amidst some desolate field),
She saith, "Who will carry this bough, all golden, to her,
  That thus, may the wealth of my passioning heart be revealed?

"Whoso the Realm of The Shades will descend with my gift,
  My Sweet One, receiving, will surely, the bringer requite;
Yet, whoso descendeth, perchance, not again shall uplift
  A welcoming face to the wide-raying, mortal-lov'd light!"

I heard. And, leaving all those that sickle or glean,
I came where thy mother sat, dread in her grief, and besought —
"Give me thy token, to bear to the Kingdom Unseen;
For wing'd are my feet with desire, and of fear have I nought!" . . .

Thus, in thy hands the bough, all golden, I place.—
Queen of the Under-World, give the reward that is mine:
Lift, out of slumber lethean, one only-loved face,
Whose eyes with remembrance, though but for one moment, shall shine!

THE LADY OF TRIPOLI

By Curtis Hidden Page

To Geoffroy Rudel

Poet far across the seas, my poet,
I have heard your songs of adoration
Brought by pilgrims from the distant country —
I have heard, and bowed before your worship,
Bowed before Love's self, the bright divine one.

Not to me those songs that you have chanted —
You have loved Love's self, and sung his praises,
Love, O Love, the wine of God's own chalice,
Love, O Love, the broken bread we feed on.

Yet to me you sung those songs of Love's self,
Even of me you thought when you were singing,
Even to me you sent your soul in music
Over the far waters, O my poet.

You have throned me far above my queenship,
You have crowned me, who so crowned of women! —
You have shrined me, to myself made holy.

If you knew — ah, this is all my answer —
Would that you might know, might know it sometime!

If I could but tell you, tell you somehow —
Not in song — I ask not that high warrant —
Not in song, but in this simple speaking,
Poet-king, that I am Queen and woman . . .
I am woman, and the woman loves you.

Poet-king, for you my state is Queenly;
I am beautiful — for you, my poet;
Priest of Love, for you I keep me holy.

Yet in dreams I must leave throne and altar,
Wander in our Eastern gardens, languorous,
Whisper to the lilies "Now I love him" . . .

I am beautiful — for you, my lover;
I am like our lilies, faint with longing;
I am like the roses, fragrant, fragrant . . .
I am like your violets, waiting, waiting,

Till you come . . .
And yet one hope is dearer —

If I might — oh if I might step downward,
Down along the many throne-steps, toward you —
Down from out your altar's incense, toward you —
Somehow pass the long dividing waters
And come forward, upward, to you waiting —
That were best, the best of all, my poet . . .
That were best, the best of all, my lover.

You should take me, own me, change me over
To the image of your thought and longing,
And should grant me one desire, one only —

You should let me sit down on your foot-stool,
Rest my head against your knees, look upward,
— I your princess, I your Eastern princess —
And sometimes your hand should cool my forehead
And your lips should touch my hair, so softly . . .
Then should I be throned and crowned forever,
O my poet-king, my poet-lover.

THE GERMAN BOOK WORLD

By Amelia von Ende

IT is curious to observe how the creative and the critical forces in the world of letters alternate in inverse ratio. As soon as the former spends itself, the latter steps in to plough and plant and about the possibilities of the next crop. They follow as regularly as the weed, to prepare the soil for the new harvest and to utter prophesies farmer's seasons.

Germany seems to have reached the stage when the creative impetus of the century's end has been exhausted and the critical reaction once more asserts itself. The new school is being admitted into the histories of German literature and has become the subject of numerous critical monographs. In the third and revised edition of Dr. Richard M. Meyer's 'Deutsche Literaturgeschichte des 19, Jahrunderts' (Georg Bondi, Berlin), there are few omissions from the long list of contemporary writers; it is as inclusive as it is impartial. The grouping may not always be natural, following the law of growth from within outward, nor the sequence logical. But a historian of the present does not command the distance needed to see contemporary objects in correct perspective. That the moderns are noticed at all, before time has assigned to them their permanent place in the literature of their country, is cause enough for rejoicing; for it is a significant deviation from the iron rule, a triumph the living may be proud of.

In his 'Gestalten und Probleme' (Georg Bondi, Berlin), the same author also displays a sane and just appreciation of phenomena which hardly bear the stamp of academic approval. Among the many interesting papers collected under that title, none is more fascinating than that on Bogumil Goltz, the most brilliant exponent of the 'classical ruffianism,' of which Laurence Sterne was a British example. But in reality the intellectual 'Grobian' is as much indigenous to the Teuton soil of all periods as the 'Berserker' to its remote past. As an exemplar of that type, Goltz was a figure occupying a unique position among his contemporaries and one deserving of being remembered. There is a sympathetic study of Theodor Fontane, who formed a link between the old and the new school. There is also a tribute to Nietzsche, who is credited not only with indelibly pressing the stamp of his individualism upon the modern German soul, but also with changing the values of the German tongue. No man

revolutionized German prose style more thoroughly than Nietzsche. The subject matter of these papers is of wide range and they are loosely grouped under headings like 'Romanticism,' 'Transition,' 'New Tendencies.'

Of the numerous monographs published recently none are more satisfactory both as to substance and form, than the little volumes brought out by Bard, Marquardt & Co., Berlin, under the collective title 'Die Literatur,' with Georg Brandes as editor of the series. In topography, illustration and binding they are exquisite specimens of modern German book-making. One of the most recent additions is a double volume, 'Die deutsche Dichtung seit Heinrich Heine' by Karl Henckell. It combines the features of a historical and critical review with those of an anthology; for the estimate of the poets is accompanied by numerous examples of their verse embodied in the text. Thoroughly familiar and in sympathy with his subject, Henckell begins with Platen, whom he calls a sword-bearer of beauty, and passes in review all the most striking figures in German verse until he reaches the present time and closes with an appreciation of Richard Schaukal. Himself one of the leaders of the new school, Henckell has long outgrown its limitations and proves himself a critic of mature judgment and taste. Only his language partakes of some of the distinct characteristics of the group, known as Young Germany today; he shares with his colleagues a tendency toward far-fetched imagery and impressionistic word-craft. Nevertheless the picture which he draws of the development of German poetry within the last half century, is clear and many of the portraits which he limns stand out in bold relief. Heinrich Leuthold, Heinrich von Reder, Peter Hille, Richard Dehmel, Riehard Schaukal and some others have never before been as strongly and sympathetically characterized. Among the illustrations there are some gems and the facsimiles also add to the interest of the book.

In another volume of the series, 'Das Nibelungenlied,' Max Burckhard gives a history of the stories of Siegfried and Chriemhild, Gunter and Brunhild, as they have at various times appeared in German poetry, either in epic or dramatic form, until the genius of Richard Wagner combined the god-myths and the hero-lore of his country in his monumental music drama 'Der Ring des Nibelungen' and made clear the eternally human meaning of the old Sagas. It is very interesting to look back upon the 'horned Siegfried' of Hans Sachs and to compare Fouquée's 'Sigurd der Schlangentoedter' and Raupach's 'Nibelungenhort' with later works on the same subject. Raupach's play held the boards of the Burgtheater in Vienna as late as the year 1857, and for a long time prevented Hebbel from seeing his Nibelungen performed. Burckhard does not think much

of the epic version by Wilhelm Jordan, who had attempted to trace the ideas of modern Germany to the source of the old Sagas and committed many anachronisms in the effort. He also censures Jordan's language, both for frequent lapses into prose and platitude and for its affectations. The book has a bibliography and a number of reproductions of wood-cuts and facsimiles from old editions of the 'Nibelungenlied.'

A little volume in the series, called 'Die Kultur' and edited by Dr. Cornelius Gurlitt, is called 'Kant und Goethe' and is an interesting study of their relative philosophy by Georg Simmel. Goethe's monism is clearly demonstrated in this comparison of the two men. While Kant is occupied with the development of an analytic condition, Goethe devotes himself to a synthetic condition. Goethe stands on the platform of undifferentiated unity, which is the starting-point of all intellectual movements; Kant emphasizes the duality into which this unity has diverged.

Almost simultaneously with the appearance of the first English translation of Max Stirner's 'Einzige und sein Eigentum' in this country — 'The Ego and His Own,' translated by Steven T. Byington (Benj. R. Tucker, New York), there has been published in 'Die Literatur' a brief appreciation of Max Stirner by Max Messer. As the translator may have struggled to render in English the title of that book, so Stirner himself according to Messer did not at once find the terms to suit his ideas. Three years before the appearance of his great work, he had suggested its outlines in an essay on Humanism and Religion, in which he called 'Der Einzige' 'Der Sittliche.' Later he wavered between 'egotist' and 'personalist.' The translator's choice of 'The Ego' seems very happy. Messer's sympathetic estimate of the philosopher, whose influence upon modern German thought is rivalling that of Nietzsche, may be of great value as an introduction to the work now before the English-reading world.

There is a breath of the spirit of both, Stirner and Nietzsche, in the poetry of Young Germany. They strengthened and deepened the individualistic tendencies of the time. In the poetry of John Henry Mackay, to whom we owe the re-discovery of Stirner, of Evers, Dehmel, and others the influence of those master minds is unmistakable. Even in the verse of Karl Henckell, who is too much of an artist to burden his poetry with philosophy, there is an occasional suggestion of the deep underlying current of modern thought, which in Germany means a reading of life based upon the rights of the ego. In Henckell's latest volume of verse, 'Schwingungen' (Bard, Marquardt & Co., Berlin), this is mellowed into a glad consciousness of self. Henckell is a poet of great latitude. His lyre has many strings. There is no phase of life that he does not embrace with

sympathetic understanding. He spreads before the reader a panorama of wonderful images and calls forth in the soul a manifold echo. He invests nature with a fanciful symbolism, sometimes clarified into the dreamy serenity of a genuine 'Maerchen' mood. 'Morgen und Abend im Walde' is a gem in sentiment and atmosphere. 'Auf Ruegen' is a wreath of sonnets of a wide variety of moods. There is a strong personal note in the verse of Henckell, and it rings clear and true. There are also some exqusite translations of poems by Verhaeren and Ada Negri.

Carl Spitteler is a unique personality among the lyric poets of Germany. His humor is more grim than genial, his wit more mordant than brilliant; his skepticism is apt to find expression in bitter sarcasm. Yet there is a peculiar charm in his poetry, a certain intellectual fascination hard to define. Perhaps it is the intensity of his individualism. Spitteler never chooses the broad highway, if he can see a hidden path leading to the same goal. He calls his latest volume of verse 'Extramundana' (Eugen Diederichs, Leipsic), 'cosmic' poems, and indeed they are of universal meaning. He does not as in old myths offer solution for the problems of life, but a poetical conception thereof. His style has strength, preciseness and simplicity. Though the decorative element is absent from his verse, there is music in it—the rhythm of thought and word. Every line is fraught with meaning and in the images which elucidate this meaning the poet draws upon many sources — nature, science, art, mythology.

Albert Geiger's poetry is of quite another quality. He does not stand aloof and criticise the world, like Spitteler, but he embraces it with that great love of nature which is identical with love of life. There is nothing brilliant in the world of Geiger's ideas and images. He impresses chiefly through breadth of line and delicacy of color, and a rare warmth of feeling, which he communicates to his readers. As he sees in love the source and the essence of life, so he sees in beauty the only salvation from sorrow.

'Even thou, my heart,
Must weary of thy grief;
Bid fall asleep thy pain,
Banish thy specter train,
And but into the peaceful blue
Eyes of beauty thou shalt ever gaze.'

This is a typical Geiger mood, tender, serene, earnest. The line of his poetical evolution begins with love of nature and culminates in the love of man and woman. After the lyrical preludes in the volume entitled 'Duft, Farbe, Ton' (J. Bielefeld, Karlsruhe), his 'Tristan,' a love drama in two parts, poetic in conception and diction, dignified, yet playable, is a remarkable achievement.

Theodor Suse is recently attracting attention. He can be characterized as a modern Minnesinger, whose poetry has all the purity and dignity, the sweetness and the simplicity of a remote past, when men saw reality through the lens of romance and the images created by their intellect were quickened into life by the strong beat of their own hearts. In the world of Suse sentiment ever triumphs over reason. He has a wonderful sense of form and his verse has that quality of melody, which invites the composer to translate his words into music. Like Geiger he infuses new life into old myths, as in his 'Merlin-Salome-Pygmalion' (S. Hirzel, Leipzig).

Christian Morgenstern's 'Melancholie' (Bruno Cassirer, Berlin) is a book of lyrics of deep, rich mellowness in tone and color, vibrating with a serenity of rhythm remotely suggesting Goethe. But with all its noble dignity and harmony, the poetry of Morgenstern lacks spontaneity; it is too evidently a product of conscious and conscientious labor; the poet trimmed and smoothed out all the creases of the creative process before he sent his book into the world. It lacks the freshness of a new arrival.

Georg Sylvester Viereck has added a few poems to the volume published three years ago and calls his new book 'Niniveh und andere Gedichte' (J. G. Cotta, Stuttgart). Niniveh stands for New York. In its magnitude and its magnificence, its wealth and its vice the poet sees a reincarnation of Babylon. He succeeds in conveying a very picturesque and vivid impression of the modern metropolis; but it betrays the limitations of his vision. He dwells only upon one side of its life, the mad chase for lust; for the other side, the brave struggle for bread, he has not a word. Otherwise so alert in tracing the trend of time, it is surprising that he has evidently no interest or no understanding for what is after all the most striking trait of the modern metropolis, the strenuous struggle for mere existence, in which its millions are engaged. The absence of a new note either in the direction of the widening of his horizon or the deepening of his sentiment, is to be regretted, for it proves that he has not surpassed his first truly remarkable book. Of the minor poems in the volume not included in the first 'Ave Venus Triumphatrix' and 'Fruehlingssegen' contain images of great beauty, but are too labored to ring true.

Few poets nowadays choose the epic form. One of the most remarkable efforts in this line is the 'Jesus' by Hermann Kroepelin of Malchow, published by the author. The poem is a series of pictures revealing a soul, the soul of Jesus, and conveys a portrait, which if not historically true, is psychologically probable and therefore humanly convincing. The poet shows Jesus grappling with the problem of his individual mission, striving for peace and harmony in a world of strife and discord. He pictures Jesus

as unconsciously working out his own and the salvation of mankind, as if moved by an unknown power pursuing a lofty aim in the evolution of man. There is great strength in the conception of the subject and warmth and sympathy in its presentation.

Two Christ dramas have also been published. Karl Weiser's 'Jesus' (Ph, Reclam, Leipzig) is in four parts: 'Herod,' 'The Baptist,' 'The Savior,' 'The Passion.' The first and the second parts are the strongest; there the poet could freely shape his character; but where Christ appears as he is known to us by the gospels, the author's strength failed him. Jesus is a hero of the living word, not of action, therefore not a dramatic hero, and every attempt at making a play of His life, must necessarily fall short of the poet's intentions. Another Christ play, 'Das Ewige' by Max Semper (Egon Fleischel & Co., Berlin) is in two parts, of which only the first, 'The Sacrifice,' is published. This drama, too, is of noble conception and both in its proportions and its diction has something of the dignity of an oratorio rather than a drama. The note which vibrates through this work is a deep resonant organ chord.

Dramatic production has received much encouragement from the theaters during the past months; but although plays by some of the men most prominent in German letters today were produced, not one of them proved a really great achievement. Detlev von Liliencron's 'Knut der Herr' (Schuster & Loeffler, Berlin), written twenty years ago, corroborated the impression made by a reading of the book, that the poet presents in it a series of intensely dramatic ballads — 'Ballade' in the German sense of the word — upon a background of picturesquely historical atmosphere, but fails to weld them into a structure of firm dramatic unity. Ludwig Fulda calls 'Der heimliche Koenig' a romantic comedy and it has indeed the poetic charm of a 'Maerchen' play. But the success with the audience was not so much due to the literary quality of the play, its fluent verse and its admirable construction, as to the meaning underlying the story. It is a mild satire upon royal power, cleverly trifling with a moderate liberalism, just daring enough to create something of a sensation, but not daring enough to convince of its sincerity. The triangular relation between the royal marionette, the very human consort and the bucolic paramour, has an element of *opera bouffe* in it which did not fail to produce its effect.

Frank Wedekind, poet, actor and manager, wrote a play some years ago, 'Fruehlings Erwachen' (Albert Langen, Munich), which was recently performed in Berlin. The first two acts, picturing the awakening of the sex instinct in young people growing up in the metropolis, are a human document of vital importance, treating the difficult problem with a dignified

pathos and convincing realism. But in the third act, the later Wedekind makes his entrance with the knowing grin of the cynic only too well known from his recent works, and the final impression left by the play is decidedly unpleasant. Hermann Bahr, the facile theorist and technician of the moderns, achieved no little success with 'Der arme Narr' and suffered a dismal failure with his 'Ringelspiel.' The first play has an interesting conflict, suggesting the basic idea in d'Annunzio's 'Lazarus.' Two lives are placed in contrast, that of a musician, who after a life ruled by the senses and by his erratic impulses, drifts into insanity, and that of his brother, a man of stern principles, who looks upon the other's defection with the self-satisfied superciliousness of the righteous. But the musician's child-like joy of life and trust in man make the man of duty feel that after all he has been a fool to go through life without joy or love. The play is well constructed and the characters splendidly protrayed. Some of Paul Scherbart's dramatical grotesques have been produced and in spite of their exotic fancy found favor with the audience, which was not slow in discovering their deep human meaning. The scene of 'Das dumme Luder' is the planet Jupiter; that of 'Der Schornsteinfeger,' a satire upon European civilization and the custom of duelling is Constantinople. There was also a political play, 'Der Regierungswechsel,' and a pathetic tragedy, 'Der Herr Kammerdiener Kneetschke.'

Georg Hirschfeld, like his master, Gerhart Hauptmann, is vainly endeavoring to rise to the standard of his early achievements and turns from tragedy to comedy to court success. But the lack of genuine humor is too apparent in both; they are the sad children of a sad age. Hirschfeld chose a theme in his 'Mieze und Maria,' the dramatic possibilities whereof have not yet been exhausted; he attempted to parodize the life of leisure on aesthetic lines, which is affected by a class of moderns not necessarily intellectual. In the artistic Grunewald villa of the Weisachs, life is a symphony of form, color, and tone in which the people appear as Leitmotive. Into this world, which is more the creation of the stage manager and property man than of the poet, Hirschfeld by way of contrast introduces a popular Berlin type, the precocious daughter of the tenements with all the brutal frankness and common sense of her class. Mieze Hempel is the illegitimate child of the aesthetic hero and is speedily adopted by the childless sentimental wife. Mieze is named Maria and her aesthetical education not only gives rise to many ludicrous episodes, but awakens in the foster-parents human instincts that had long been slumbering. When the girl who proves not easily amenable to a life of culture, leaves the villa, where as she says, she has only been a piece of furniture, the play ends with the prospect of

a legitimate heir — or heiress — to the aesthetic house. Too much burdened with ideas, that demand being aired, Hirschfeld has marred the simple lines of this comedy by the introduction of philosophical reflections, critical remarks and words of prophesy and his desire to be taken seriously even in comedy works his defection.

But the most pathetic spectacle in the German theatrical world was the utter failure of Gerhart Hauptmann's comedy 'Die Jungfern vom Bischofsberg' (S. Fischer, Berlin). Whether it is the ambition of the artist, oblivious of his limitations, confident of being able to rise to another climax, or whether it is the financial necessity of a man, who has for some years enjoyed a large income from royalties and suddenly realizes its decrease, which drives him to over-production — the fact, that Hauptmann gives proof upon proof of his declining power can no longer be denied even by his warmest admirers. It is really painful to see him struggling in every new work with the sterility which has set in and which he seems unable to overcome. There is a discord in the world of his ideas, ever disturbing the harmony which is the basic principle of art. Contrasts which his inner feeling cannot reconcile crowd upon his vision and his creative genius fails to supply the connecting link. The dreamer and the reasoner are in silent controversy, the former with eyes turned upward to ideal heights, the latter with an eye riveted upon the box office, and the audience feels the unworded dispute and turns away disappointed and offended. The happy union of reality and romance in 'Hannele' was one of those master strokes which cannot be repeated. It seems strange that Hauptmann should persist in attempting it again and again. For it is this same problem which he presents in his comedy.

Into the home of the maidens on the Bischofsberg, each an ideal of womanhood, all living an ideal still life in the seclusion of their garden, the awkward courtship of their provincial, commonplace suitors brings a breath of realistic burlesque. The sharp contrast of the two worlds thus confronted is brought out by amusing incidents, as hackneyed as they are effective, but they are not knit into an effective whole; they lack the surrounding atmosphere and fall asunder. Nor are the characters consistent with the spirit of the play. With the exception of Agathe, she of pensive melancholy, and Lux, her sister with the joyfully singing soul, the figures are unconvincing and do not move with spontaneity. The teacher who is about to win Agathe from the love of her youth, a physician whose spirit of adventure has prompted him to go to America, is overdrawn and too plainly betrays the bitterness with which Hauptmann regards this type. The joke played upon this representative of cultured Philistia by Lux and her young

cousin, who represent vagabondia, is stupid and tempts Hauptmann to resort to cheap worn-out tricks. The physician himself, who returns in time to claim his betrothed, is only an artificial embodiment of a certain temperament. The scandalous conduct of the audience during the performance adds an unpleasant chapter to the history of the Berlin stage; and the author's appearance before the curtain, smiling a sad, forced smile, was unspeakably pathetic.

The world of fiction has been enriched by a number of remarkable books, such as Hermann Stegemann's Alsatian story 'Die als Opfer Fallen' (Egon Fleischel & Co., Berlin), Hermann Dahl's tsory of an artistic temperament 'Harald Atterdal' (F. Fontane & Co., Berlin), Clara Viebig's strong problem novel 'Einer Mutter Sohn' (Egon Fleischel & Co., Berlin), Lulu von Strauss and Torney's delightful story of mediaeval Dutch superstition 'Das Meerminneke' (Egon Fleischel & Co., Berlin), Charlotte Knoeckel's powerful picture of factory life 'Kinder der Gasse' (S. Fischer & Co., Berlin) and others. It has not been visibly disturbed, however, by any sensational success such as that of Frenssen's 'Hilligenlei' a year ago, wlich is still the subject of much controversy in the magazines. In the mean time Frenssen has published a new work that challenges attention: 'Peter Moor's Fahrt nach Suedwest' (G. Grote, Berlin): It is the shortest and the strongest of Frenssen's works of fiction. He has foregone his taste for excursions into parts foreign to the story and has produced a condensed and uniform narrative of experiences in the African colonies, which by its simplicity becomes so much more impressive. It sheds much light upon the conflict between the natives and the German colonists and missionaries. He points out the discrepancy between the teachings of the former and the actions of the latter. The settlers that come to the African colonies under escort of troops treat the natives contrary to the gospel of brotherly love which they had learned from the pious men. Frenssen's eye for the beauties of the landscape is evident in many passages; but he has learned to eliminate the irrevelant and in this least ambitious of his works has reached perhaps the climax of his power. It is a book not only of timely import, but one of such artistic merit as to give unalloyed pleasure to the reader.